

POLSKA AKADEMIA NAUK
INSTYTUT GEOGRAFII I PRZESTRZENNEGO ZAGOSPODAROWANIA
IM. STANISŁAWA LESZCZYCKIEGO

Piotr Eberhardt

POLITICAL MIGRATIONS ON POLISH TERRITORIES (1939–1950)



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Piotr Eberhardt

MIGRACJE POLITYCZNE
NA ZIEMIACH POLSKICH
(1939–1950)



WARSZAWA 2011

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To Adam

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Preface for English edition

Contemporary Europeans can hardly imagine the degree of violence which prevailed on this continent in the middle of the past century. More is known about the actual military actions and tremendous material and human losses than about the degree and consequences of massive movements of people, either fleeing the hostilities or forcibly transferred, deported and exiled. And yet, these events were taking place within living memory although admittedly the number of witnesses and participants is inevitably declining. The Author of the present volume belongs to this dwindling category, so does the author of the present remarks.

Professor Piotr Eberhardt is associated with the Institute of Geography and Space Economy, Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw. He is a known expert on the subject with many publications devoted to the demographic, ethnic and geopolitical issues of Eastern and East-Central Europe to his credit. In this volume originally published by the prestigious Western Institute in Poznań he presents a wide panorama of various types of migrations during the critical decade of World War II and its aftermath. Without going into a detailed and probably insolvable terminological discussion he defines the topic of his study as political migrations. In so doing he acknowledges the dominant role of political factors in generating the moves which amounted to some 30 million on the territory of Poland (both within the pre-war and post-war frontiers for a total of some 400,000 km²). Even though the book deals with a part of war induced European migrations it does cover most of them as this territory was affected in a particularly intensive and cruel way.

As a geographer Professor Eberhardt has a particular concern with space and begins his analysis with territorial changes which were introduced repeatedly by the political and administrative authorities mostly hostile to the local societies. At the very beginning of the period in question both German and Soviet rulers, then closely collaborating carved out the territory of conquered Poland and incorporated parts of it into their respective administrative structures or, as in the case of a General Gouvernement created a totally dependent German controlled "reservation" for Poles and Jews. At the end of the conflict the defeated Third Reich had to pay with considerable territorial losses while the victorious Soviet Union (which in the meantime changed the alliances) was allowed to keep what it had gained originally in understanding with the Nazi power (with small

corrections). Poland was compensated for the territorial loss of some 180,000 km² with 104,000 km² at the expense of Germany (including Gdańsk/Danzig).

Population movements which are the main subject of this volume were taking place against the background of these changing territorial arrangements. The Author discusses in chronological order migrations caused by 1939 campaign (flight of civilians, transfer of prisoner of war – some to their death), deportations of Polish and Jewish inhabitants from the areas incorporated into the Reich proper, several waves of deportations undertaken by the Soviet authorities from the conquered Eastern provinces of Poland (including various ethnic groups), different moves on the German controlled area (inflow of German settlers, forcible recruitment of labour force and its shipment into Reich, various displacements of Poles including those from Warsaw after the failed 1944 rising, shipments of Jews and their extermination). Approaching end of the eastern front unleashed the flight of Germans, both recent arrivals and long established communities, followed by their deportations and transfers from the lost territories as a result of allied decisions taken in Potsdam in summer 1945.

The Soviet repressions against the Polish population continued into the early post war months as thousands were shipped eastwards while at the same time Poles evicted from their homes in the lost eastern provinces were transferred to the new Poland including recently acquired post-German areas. As well there were other moves – return of Poles from the West (both former emigrants and war exiles), outflow of most of Jews who survived the Holocaust, transfers of Ukrainians and Belorussians from and within Poland. Finally there is a section on resettlement of former German territories newly acquired and emptied of the former inhabitants and now replaced by people forcibly moved from the Soviet Union as well as settlers from the interior of Poland.

The text is supported by plentiful statistical data mostly derived from official sources. However, sometimes there are confusing differences resulting either from different definitions, different timing or varying estimates. The Author attempts to explain and reconcile these variations or else presents different versions with or without his own commentaries. Such meticulous care to remain fair and objective is a very commendable aspect of his method.

All through the book statistics concern mostly the actual flows, which implies that some individuals may be counted more than once. For example, Germans settled during the war in General Gouvernement who later escaped when the front was approaching or Poles who were deported to Germany or the interior of Russia during the war and returning thereafter. The total size of these flows estimated at 30 million includes certainly less individuals affected.

All these moves which resulted in varying degrees of hardship and in some cases even loss of life led to far reaching demographic, ethnic, cultural and religious changes. The overall results and various impacts are presented in the final part of the book.

Population on the present territory of Poland (312,000 km²) changed from 32.3 million in 1939 to 23.9 million in 1946 and 25 million in 1950. If a changing Polish state is taken into account the numbers are different. In 1939 total population of the country was estimated at 35.3 million in 1939 (with ethnic minorities representing

34.5 %) compared to 25 million in 1950. It took some thirty years to recover and reach 35 million again in 1980.

The Author point out that one of the consequences of losses and migrations was a reversal of centuries long trends such as gradual eastward shift of German speaking, mostly protestant population as well as the Polish speaking Catholics. Now the cultural frontiers are located further west in both cases – Poles vs. Germans and Poles vs. Ukrainians. Another result of all these changes was a new geopolitical situation in this region and in the relations between Poland and her neighbours, also briefly discussed by Author.

Interested reader will find in the present volume a well founded and competently argued analysis of a very complex process with far reaching and long lasting consequences.

Leszek A. Kosiński

Foreword

One of the characteristic phenomena of the 20th century is constituted by mass migrations of various social and ethnic groups. It is estimated that due to forced political migrations approximately 100 million persons lost their location of residence, with more than 50 million of such displaced persons in Europe alone. Already in the years 1913–1914 a quarter million of Greeks were resettled by Bulgarians and Turks from Eastern Thrace and Anatolia to Greece, and 400 000 Muslims and Turks – by Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians – from Western Macedonia and Western Thrace to Anatolia. With respect to the period 1939–1950, in more than 100 various events of population transfers, it is estimated that roughly 40 million Europeans had to leave their home areas.

The territory of Poland, both in her boundaries of 1938, and of 1945, occupies a very particular place in this “wandering of peoples”. Studies of Piotr Eberhardt are devoted to the analysis of these processes. Eberhardt, an outstanding scholar and an authority in the field of migrations and ethnic relations in Poland and in Central-Eastern Europe in the 20th century, considers in his most recent monograph in a multifaceted manner the political migrations of the years 1939–1950, which took place on Polish territories.

*This monograph sums up the studies to date on the subject, both those authored by Piotr Eberhardt, including *Polish Eastern Boundary 1939–1945* (in Polish, Warsaw, 1992), *Between Russian and German; Ethnic Transformations in Central-Eastern Europe in the 20th Century* (in Polish, Warsaw, 1996), and those by other researchers.*

Especially high value ought to be attached to the division into periods and a detailed analysis in the chronological setting of the political migrations, taking place on Polish lands in the time span considered. The Author distinguishes as many as sixteen migration events having political background. Their presentation starts with the movements of the population, caused by the German aggression against Poland in September 1939 and the defensive war, and ends with the re-population of the so-called “Regained Lands” in the North and West of the new Poland. A special attention is paid to the resettlements and deportations of the population from the Polish territories, incorporated in 1939 to the Third Reich and to the Soviet Union, as well as to the Holocaust of the Polish Jews. A Reader shall also find a lot

of information on the inflow of the “German colons” on the Polish territories, on the flight and resettlement of the German population in the period before and after the Potsdam conference, on the repatriation of Poles from various parts of Europe, as well as on the resettlement of the Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians, the citizens of the pre-war Poland, after 1945. An important complement of the analyses is constituted by numerous tables, diagrams and maps.

Despite the fact that sixty five years elapsed since the end of World War II, problems of forced migrations give still rise to numerous political controversies, including those affecting international relations. Insufficient knowledge is conducive to the frequently emotional and stereotype-based view of these problems, also in the public debate concerning historical politics. This applies, in particular, to the Slovak–Hungarian, German–Czech or Polish–German relations.

Piotr Eberhardt sheds light in his monograph on these issues, as well. He indicates the consequences of the World War II, not only in terms of the shifts of boundaries and political transformations, but also in terms of changes in ethnic and denominational structures. This concerns relations of Poles with Germans and Russians, but also with Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians. Thus, for instance, the division between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, having lasted for four hundred years, along with the division between the Slavonic and Germanic nations, has been transferred far to the West, and its current course goes along the Polish–German border, from Świnoujście to Zgorzelec. The geopolitical setting of the Baltic area of Europe underwent an essential change. Germans lost the lands in the North and West of Poland. In a similar manner the geopolitical configuration in the Sudety Mts. region changed, bringing about an entirely new quality into the relations between Poles and Czechs. While in 1938 Polish–German border stretched over 1912 km, its length now is at 456 km.

The study of Piotr Eberhardt, published first in Polish language in 2010 by the Western Institute (Instytut Zachodni) in Poznań, constituted an important element in quite a long list of publications of that Institute, which started with the publication of the materials from an international conference, first of its kind in Poland, having taken place in December 1993 under the title *Lost Fatherland. Forced Resettlements and Deportations as Common Experience*.

Andrzej Sakson

I. INTRODUCTION

Large-scale population movements, which took place during the World War II on Polish territories, affected more than 30 million people. These political migrations were among the largest in the history of mankind. They resulted from the expansive politics of Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. The victims were Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Gypsies, who were forced to leave, oftentimes for ever, their homes.

Problems, linked with the origins, course, scale, and the political, demographic, social and economic consequences of these forced movements of population have not just a cognitive significance. They are recurrently used for concrete political purposes, having little to do with the drive towards presentation and explanation of the historical past. The subject matter has over the recent years gained new interest and became a hot issue in the media. This is, in particular, the effect of the intention to commemorate the victims of the resettlements through construction of a museum in Berlin, which provoked an anxiety in Poland. A large proportion of the public opinion in Poland is convinced that such kind of a spectacular action would only to a limited degree broaden knowledge on the causes and effects of the events, associated with the political migrations, having occurred in the years of the World War II and soon after its end. Opinions are formulated that such an initiative, and then its material implementation might lead to an atmosphere of distrust and emotions by concentrating attention on the episodes of war that are just a selection among the totality of events and are separated from the general background of the historical processes.

At the same time, attention is turned towards the necessity of more intensive fundamental studies in this domain. There are, namely, many problems in the domain that require studying the source materials and their assessment. Until now, the analytic studies have been dominating that do not show the totality of the political conditioning. The distinct one-sidedness, and the narrow character of the research carried out, both in Poland and abroad, mainly in Germany, result from numerous reasons that are mutually independent. Mass resettlements had quite varied and frequently incomparable character and course, both in temporal and in geographical perspective. Some of these migrations had

genocidal purposes and aimed at extermination of the civil population. There were also movements forced simply by the changes of political boundaries or by the military operations¹. After the military conquest of a territory, the new occupants usually aimed at ethnic homogenisation of the territory annexed, being driven by the ethnic, denominational or class criteria. The processes of political migrations were highly complex both in terms of time and space, and in terms of magnitudes and structures. This makes a comprehensive and synthetic scientific interpretation more difficult. Such a very complicated subject matter was considered, independently, by historians, political scientists, geographers, sociologists and demographers. They were usually faithful to their own discipline and the related interests.

The forced movements of population encompassed an enormously vast territory, stretching between the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Seas. Geographical heterogeneity of this area also constituted a difficulty for the scientific inquiry. The analyses were usually limited to a selected territory or a selected population. Victims of persecutions, discrimination and resettlement came, in principle, from all the nationalities inhabiting Central Europe. Scholars, depending upon their own nationality, concentrated their attention on the migrations of their compatriots. This applies in a particular manner to the German literature, which is devoted almost exclusively to the post-war movements and resettlements of the German population, with only marginal treatment of political migrations of other ethnic groups. Given such one-sided perspectives, the original causes of the migration movements get lost from sight. It is beyond doubt that programmed ethnic purges were started already in the years 1939–1940 by the authorities of the then German state. They concerned Poles and Jews. German population was forced to leave behind their home territories only at the end of the war. This was associated with the shifts of the boundaries and the loss of the formerly German eastern provinces.

The subject matter of the migrations and the resettlements has been and remains highly complicated and susceptible to purposeful or incidental manipulation. Political conditioning in Poland, like, anyway, in all the countries of Central-Eastern Europe, was not conducive to the objective scientific insight, and so the way of interpreting and moral evaluation of these dramatic historical events changed several times over. Some facts and issues have been during the last 60 years more exposed, while other ones, equally important, neglected or margin-

¹ The here considered *political migrations* are being defined in a variety of manners in the Polish literature of the subject, including such expressions as: translocation, resettlement, relocation, deportation, expulsion, expatriation, repatriation, emigration, evacuation, exodus, flight, etc. In the present text these various notions and their expressions shall be treated in a relatively loose manner, often synonymously. The author is not prepared to carry out a systematic scientific analysis of the various, often very closely related, but also frequently quite differently interpreted notions, especially as they imply definite evaluations, associated not just with emotions, but also with ideological attitudes and political views. A general principle was adopted that the term is used for a given case of forced political migration, which has been most frequently used for this case by the Polish authors. Such an approach is exceptionally little precise. Yet, the attempt of classifying, systematising or typology would not secure avoiding debatable assumptions or conclusions. Hence, the terms used in the text are not always fully adequate from the point of view of legal or humanitarian-moral description or justification.

alised. In the period of real socialism censorship functioned in Poland, seriously limiting the possibility of impartial presentation of the entirety of problems associated with forced migrations, whose forerunner was the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, signed on August 23rd, 1939.

Thus, during several decades after World War II it was not possible in Poland to present in an objective manner the resettlements done by the Soviet authorities. There existed rigorous limitations, which hampered scientific research. Situation was different for the possibility of presenting and evaluating the forced migration movements within the wide Polish-German borderland, initiated by the Germans and continued, in the final phase of the war, by Poles and Soviets. The latter ones were fulfilling the Potsdam verdict, which unambiguously stipulated the translocation of the German population from the new territories of the Polish state. The analytic studies, devoted to these problems, conducted by Polish scholars, despite certain degree of tendentiousness in the explanation of some circumstances and omissions of some drastic facts, were, on the whole, rather to the point and relatively objective. These studies were carried out by outstanding Polish scholars, associated with the Western Institute in Poznan. The scientific work thus done in this domain is significant and its content has not become outdated.

Immediately after the downfall of communism the possibility arose in Poland of including in the respective scope of research not only the so-called western problems, but also those related to the East of Poland. In quite a short time period this cognitive gap was filled and numerous, valuable scientific studies appeared, showing in a quantitative perspective the magnitudes and the territorial ranges of the various political migrations, carried out by the totalitarian Soviet system. A number of interesting studies of the subject were published, authored mainly by scholars from Wrocław and Warsaw.

As mentioned before, in the recent years the interest arose anew in the problems of resettlements of the German population. Similarly, the Ukrainian side attempts to demonstrate that within the Polish-Ukrainian borderland unjustified translocations of the population occurred. Despite the fact that the latter issue has been in principle sufficiently clarified, it is still being brought up in the public for political reasons. There are, as well, distinct differences between, on the one hand, Polish scholars, and on the other – the Lithuanian and Belarusian ones as to the nationality of the resettled population and the scale of repressions. Even though these are issues of rather secondary importance, they clearly indicate the necessity of continuing the analytical work on both macro-and micro-spatial scales.

Yet, the most important shortcoming of Polish as well as German studies on the forced movements of population in the period of the World War II on Polish territories is the lack of appropriate syntheses, accounting for the entirety of political migrations in their political, historical and geographical aspects². It is only

² This does not mean that the world literature on the war and post-war political migrations is poor. To the contrary, the original causes and the general course, as well as estimated scale of population movements were known already immediately after the war. We can recall here the classical works of two American scholars (Schlechtmann, 1946, 1962; Kulischer, 1948). These studies, though, were based on incomplete documentation, and in many cases even incidental one. Hence, with respect to many issues the image presented was simplified, or even deformed.

quite recently (in 2008) that the publishing house Demart has put on the market a valuable atlas entitled *Resettlements, expulsions and flights 1939–1959. Atlas of the lands of Poland* (in Polish). Despite quite a popular form of this publication, it constitutes an enormously rich source of information on facts. The cartographic and graphical illustrations, provided in this atlas are very ample and informative. It was also published in the German language version, which greatly enhances its value. Yet, let us emphasise again that there are very few publications of this type, and the atlas mentioned is an exception on the global scale. The knowledge of these events is quite limited and, in addition, deformed by the low quality journalism. This is not to say that Polish literature of the subject does not offer any studies of synthetic character. We can mention here, as examples, the geographic-demographic book by A. Gawryszewski (2005), or the historical-political one by Cz. Łuczak (1993), in which movements of population on Polish territories in the years of the World War II are shown in their entirety. In these broad monographs, though, political migrations took a marginal share in comparison with other problems, of interest for both authors.

Despite the shortage of the multi-disciplinary and generalising studies and reports, Polish literature, concerning the subject of forced political migrations, having taken place in the period of World War II, is quite extensive. Certain selected specific issues, associated with particular migration events and processes, were treated in detail in the studies, leading to new and original results. This applies in a particular manner to the publications having appeared in the recent years. The substantive quality level of the more immediate post-war reports was quite differentiated, but they can also constitute an important source of information. All of them were as a rule limited in terms of time frames, the ethnic groups considered or geographical directions³. The purpose of these studies was also

Information was especially lacking on the movements of the population in the initial stage of the war, when the German and Soviet authorities were the moving force of the migrations. Nowadays we dispose of a sufficient factual documentation. This documentation, though, is dispersed among numerous analytical reports. Further, these reports represent in many cases quite a diversified interpretative value. The ones, representing adequate quality shall be made use of in consecutive chapters of this book, but before being referred to – they will be subject to a substantive assessment and critical verification, which is especially important for the studies authored by German specialists.

³ The greatest amount of information on facts concerning the course and scale of the forced political migrations carried out by the Soviet authorities can be found in the works of three authors: Ciesielski et al. (1993, 2004). Valuable studies of the subject include also those of Cherubin (1989), Głowacki (1992), Giżejewska (1997), Boćkowski (1996), Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M. (2007), Węgrzyn (2008), Zwolski (2008), Golon (2009). The bibliography related to the actions of resettlement and deportation, executed by the German Nazi occupants, is also quite ample. Special attention ought to be paid to the reports by the following authors: Jastrzębski (1968), Madajczyk (1970, 1986), Łuczak (1979), Szefer (1984), Kielboń (1985), Rutowska (2003, 2009a,b). Mass translocations of the German population were mainly the object of interest of the German authors. Yet, the work done by Polish scholars in this domain is also quite significant. We can mention here the reports, in which the German literature of the subject is considered (Banasiak, 1968; Golczewski, 1971; Meissner, 1987; Linek, 1999; Nitschke, 2000). The resettlements of the Ukrainian population had a lesser significance in both cognitive and political terms. In spite of this, valuable studies of this subject have been elaborated, containing appropriate statistical documentation (Skrzynecki, 1988; Szcześniak, Szota, 1973; Misiła, ed., 1996; Pisuliński, 2009).

to indicate clearly the initiators and the executors of these repressive translocations of the population. Hence, some of the studies contained numerous evaluative statements. In order to enhance the likelihood of the opinions presented, appropriately selected information, based on a choice of facts, was used, and attention was concentrated on the chosen issues, isolated from the broader historical context. There was, in particular, a clear tendency towards an overestimation of the scale of resettlements and the numbers of victims. This is definitely the reason for undertaking more comprehensive studies and for the necessity of a critical verification of the statistical data published.

That is why, owing to the initiative of the Western Institute, the concept arose of elaborating a significantly broadened version of the study published by the present author in a limited number of copies in 2002, in which the influence of political migrations on the demographic balance of Poland was treated in a synthetic manner. An attempt was made of accounting in that study for all of the more important migration movements, brought about by political reasons, irrespective of the perpetrator and the nationality of the victims of these drastic deeds. The earlier study was, therefore, subject to verification, updated and significantly broadened.

When the book in Polish language was already published by the Western Institute in Poznan, a decision was taken at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences of publishing it in the English language in the series of "Monographs", issued by the Institute. This decision was motivated by the fact that the mass, forced migrations of the population, which took place in Poland and in the neighbouring countries in the period of the World War II and in the post-war years are little known among the historians, geographers and demographers, using English language in their research activities. The very frequently observed ignorance brought about, alas, numerous myths and statistical, as well as substantive, errors, which are found in the world literature of the subject. This, in turn, exerts a negative influence on the adequacy of interpretation of some important political events, which took place in this crucial historical period in Central-Eastern Europe.

The scientific undertaking here presented has a clear interdisciplinary character. It refers to such disciplines of science as history, political sciences, demography and geography. Broad statistical information from the domain of scale, course and directions of the various migration movements within the time frame considered is provided. This basis of historical facts will serve to formulate the analyses and assessments of historical, political, demographic and even sociological character. In view of the fact that the author is a geographer, all kinds of generalisations and summarising conclusions shall always refer to a clearly delineated geographical territory. It can be assumed that the report is the closest to such streams of research as geo-demography, geo-history and geopolitics. Only, namely in the case of making full use of the methodology and knowledge from different fields – history, demography, political science and geography – the possibility arises of understanding the original causes and the consequences of the large-scale and complicated migration processes.

When realising the thus conceived research project certain initial methodological prerequisites had to be adopted. The first of them concerned the determination of a well-defined historical period. Year 1939 was adopted as the initial year of analysis, and year 1950 as the final year – i.e. the time instant, when the post-war repatriation of Poles from the Soviet Union ended, and, at the same time, the last organised transports carrying German population left Poland. This, however, was not the most important reason, since the really massive resettlement actions practically ended in 1948. The reasons for adopting this time limit, ending the analysis of respective facts, were of statistical character. At the end of December 1950 a population census was carried out in Poland. It was carried out in a competent manner, and its results are entirely reliable, constituting therefore fully valuable statistical material, which explains several earlier problems of substantive character. This census shows, in addition, an already stabilised demographic situation.

The second methodological choice was equally important, and it concerned the choice of the territory, with well defined geographical boundaries, that will be subject to analyses and assessments. It was assumed that most adequate for the study will be the territory situated between the eastern boundary of Poland, established after the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919–1920, and the western boundary of Poland, established after the World War II along the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers (Oder-Neisse line). Thus, altogether, the statistical and substantive analysis was performed for quite vast territory of close to half a million square kilometres, which included the area of both pre-war and post-war Poland. The western part of this area constituted before the war an integral part of Germany, while the eastern part belongs nowadays to Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania.

The subsequent methodological assumption made concerned the manner of presenting the respective processes, i.e. the chronological order rather than subject-matter oriented. The atlas mentioned before presented separately the movements of the Polish, Jewish, German, Ukrainian etc. populations. In this report a different way of presenting migration movements was chosen. Attempt was made to order them in the temporal sequence. Presentation starts with the movements that took place immediately after the beginning of the military activities in 1939. Then, consecutively, the translocations of the population are considered, taking place in the successive years of the war, up till the ones that were initiated in the final stage of war and lasted yet after its end. In view of the fact that some of them were simultaneous, certain partly subjective decisions had to be made as to their ordering in the book. In making such decisions explicit political or demographic prerequisites were referred to.

A mention was already made of the differences in the moral and historical evaluation of the resettlement actions in the publications of Polish and German specialists. These differences are understandable and they result from the different perception by the two nations of the entire history of the first half of the 20th century. The present author will make use primarily of the literature of the subject that appeared in Polish language, which, of course, poses the problem of securing a possibly high level of objectivism. In order to limit the influence of the Polish perspective, the report refers essentially to facts, trying to avoid eval-

uations. Special emphasis is placed on presentation of statistical data, although, by virtue of these data themselves, the events, associated with the Polish population, turn out to be more pronounced, while those of secondary character for the Polish side, tend to get less attention.

The multidirectional migrations, taking place during the entire period of the war, were closely related with the changes of political and administrative divisions. Every shift of a political boundary triggered off automatically in that turbulent period the forced, or, less frequently, freewill movements of the involved populations, who were obliged to adapt to the decisions made by the current victors. That is why at the beginning of the book information is provided on the changes of boundaries and political demarcations, which took place between the years 1939 and 1945.

Description and possibly precise quantification of all the important political migrations, which rolled through Polish territories in the period of one decade of the 20th century, bringing enormous geopolitical consequences, is not the sole objective of the research project undertaken. An equally important task was to uncover the scale, and then the demographic and ethnic consequences, of these great population movements. It is known that their ultimate effect consisted not only in the changes in the state of population across the entire territory considered, as well as in its particular parts, but, first of all, in the far-reaching ethnic transformations. The latter resulted from the selective nature of migrations, which affected in various periods and with different intensities Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians or Belarusians.

Ultimately, the situation that arose in 1950 was completely different from that of 1939. Numerous previously poly-ethnic areas became homogeneous in ethnic, language or religious terms. Some of the mono-ethnic areas preserved their homogeneity, but became the place of residence of quite another ethnic group, associated with completely different values of culture and civilisation. All these issues shall be subject to scientific analysis and substantive assessment. Their explanation in the causal and territorial-structural perspectives is not an easy task. Statistical information is not always reliable and complete. Interpretation necessitates a lot of care and sensitivity, since it concerns the controversial and painful problems, with respect to which numerous false opinions, myths and simplifications are deeply rooted in the consciousness of each of the nations inhabiting the territory considered.

II. POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES ON THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF POLAND BETWEEN 1939 AND 1945

When starting the presentation of the population movements, which took place in Poland in the years of the World War II and in the period immediately after the war, we should first precisely consider the territorial questions, associated with the changes of the political and administrative boundaries. At the instant of the outbreak of the World War II, Poland existed within entirely different boundaries than when it reappeared on the map of Europe after the war, following the conferences in Yalta and Potsdam (see Fig. II.1).

In such a situation a difficult problem arises of defining the boundaries of the territorial reference unit, which will be appropriate for the study and statistical assessments concerning spatial movements of the population. In order to account for all the migration movements we should consider, as indicated already in the Introduction, the situation both on the lands that Poland lost, and on those that it gained due to the political changes brought about by the World War II. Hence, when we speak of Polish Lands, in various phases of the war, we must as a rule account for the entire territory contained between the eastern border of pre-war Poland, established with the Treaty of Riga (1921), and the western border of the post-war Poland, determined at the Potsdam Conference (1945). This means that we admit as the reference unit a very vast territory. It encompasses, namely, the entire area of the pre-war Poland, that is – 389,700 sq. km in 1939, and the areas acquired in 1945 at the expense of Germany, the so-called Regained Lands, of 102,700 sq. km. Thus, the analysis concerns altogether the area of 492,400 sq. km. During the entire period of war, important movements of population were taking place on this whole territory. They were mainly of forced nature and took the form of resettlements or deportations. These forced movements concerned largely the population of Polish nationality, but Jews, Germans or Ukrainians were subject to them as well.

The migration processes were taking place during the entire period of military activities, but due to the changing military situation they were characterised by instability in time and space. Their scale, intensity and directions changed. These various movements of population were connected with the shifts of the political and administrative boundaries. Each and every consecutive definition

of the zones of influence, or of the administrative and political divisions among the different levels of the occupying authorities entailed selective migrations of population. The military defeat of the Third Reich and the determination of the geographical shape of Poland by the victorious powers brought the consecutive large migration waves, leading ultimately to the ethnic homogenisation of this part of the Central-Eastern Europe.



Fig. II.1. The political-administrative division of Poland in 1938

The geographical names, appearing on all maps, as well as mentioned in the text, are consistently Polish; the names of the localities, having belonged to Germany, are also provided in their German versions, in brackets, following the Polish name, for the period, when these localities were within the administrative boundaries of pre-war Germany.

The particular parts of this vast territory, stretching from the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers (Oder-Neisse line) in the West to the border defined by the Treaty of Riga in the East, were subject during the war to the changing geo-political and military influences. Almost every region, composing the territory considered, had in different phases of war a different political-administrative sta-

tus. This would bring various consequences for the population inhabiting a given region, depending upon the nationality, language and religion of the inhabitants. Without cognition of the ethnic structure of this territory and the detailed consideration of all of the border shifts one could hardly explain and assess the population movements taking place in that period with various intensity and timing across space.

The fate of this vast territory was first decided by the Soviet-Nazi agreements. Conform to the initial agreement concluded on 23 August 1939 Polish lands were split into two parts. The designed demarcation line went along the river San downstream to Vistula, then along Vistula to Bug-Narew, upstream Narew and its tributary Pisa to the pre-war boundary of East Prussia. This design was changed as a result of the new Soviet-German pact signed on 28 September in Moscow. Ultimately, the territory of Poland was divided in such a way that 201,000 sq. km were incorporated into the USSR, while 188,700 sq. km fell under the Nazi occupation (see Table II.1 and Fig. II.2).

Table II.1. Division of the territory of Poland between USSR and Germany in the years 1939–1941

Occupied territories. Division as of 1 January 1941	Area		Population in 1939	
	in '000 sq. km	in %	in '000	in %
Poland	389.7	100.0	35,339	100.0
Areas under Nazi occupation, divided into:	188.7	48.4	22,140	62.7
– the Reich	92.5	23.7	10,568	30.0
– the General Governorship	95.5	24.5	11,542	32.6
– Slovakia	0.7	0.2	30	0.1
Areas under Soviet occupation, divided into:	201.0	51.6	13,199	37.3
– Lithuanian SSR	8.3	2.1	537	1.5
– Belarusian SSR	103.0	26.5	4,733	13.4
– Ukrainian SSR	89.7	23.0	7,929	22.4

Source: *Mały Rocznik...* (1941, p. 5).

The demarcation line started in the South at the upper course of the river San, in the vicinity of Uzh Pass in Eastern Carpathians, then followed San downstream, leaving on the Soviet side the locality of Ustrzyki Dolne, and on the German side – Ustrzyki Górne. Following San further downstream of Ustrzyki, the course of the border allowed for the incorporation of the right-bank town of Przemyśl in the Soviet part. Close to Sieniawa the occupation divide left the line of river San and reached via a straight line Krystynopol, located on river Bug. Then, the border followed the course of the river Bug and reached the locality of Nur, situated between Sokołów Podlaski and Zambrów. At this place it went away from Bug and reached as a straight line the river Narew close to the town of Ostrołęka. Then, the border followed northwards Narew up to its tributary of Pisa and farther up

North reached the pre-war boundary with East Prussia to the North of Kolno. Additionally, as a result of a special plea from Ribbentrop, the Soviet Union ceded to Germany the region of Suwałki with the towns of Suwałki and Sejny (Bregman 1987, p. 80). The demarcation line went parallel to the longitude over this segment, in the direct vicinity of Augustów, which remained on the Soviet side. The further course of events made this border last only between 28 September 1939 and 22 June 1941. Determination of this border had not just political significance, but brought also demographic consequences. The fates of the population on both sides of the border were different. Division of the country into two parts caused important population movements. They took place not only between the two parts, but the occupants conducted, as well, within their respective zones, actions aiming at removal from definite areas of the inhabitants, who were considered unfit for various reasons: racial, ethnic, class or economic ones.



Fig. II.2. Political-administrative division of Polish territories in 1940

The territory annexed by the Soviet Union was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) – 89,700 sq. km, the Belarusian SSR –

103,000 sq. km, and the Lithuanian SSR – 8,300 sq. km¹. Significant political and administrative changes took place on the areas occupied by the German Reich. Initially, Hitler intended to establish between Bug river and the new eastern boundary of the Reich, on a part of the Polish territory, a kind of satellite Polish state (*polnischer Reststaat*), but abandoned this idea. In the headquarters of Fuehrer, on September 12th, 1939, the essential principles were adopted of the policy with respect to the territory annexed. First, the plan was to incorporate into the Reich the eastern lands (“margraviates”) lost in 1919. Second, there was an intention of creating a special province for the “ethnically alien populations”, with the capital in Cracow. Third, the entire Jewish population was to be settled between rivers Vistula and Bug. It was assumed that Vistula would constitute the eastern barrier (*Ostwall*). Simultaneously, Hitler announced ethnic destruction (*Volkstums Ausrottung*) for the non-German populations (Labuda, 1974, p. 276). These designs were partly modified after the defeat of Poland. Thus, based on the Hitler’s decrees of October 1939 new administrative breakdown was introduced on the occupied Polish territories². The decree of 8 October 1939 brought the incorporation of Pomerania, Wielkopolska, Silesia, Cuiavia, Płock Masovia, Dąbrowa Coal Basin, the major part of the Lodz province, as well as parts of Kielce and Cracow provinces into the German Reich. A separate by-law stipulated the inclusion of the county of Suwałki into the Regency of Gąbin (Gumbinen, East Prussia).

This area, incorporated into the Reich, was divided into large units, lands or provinces, subdivided into regencies. In the northern part of the area the land of West Prussia was established (*Reichsgau Westpreussen*), whose name was afterwards changed to Gdańsk-West Prussia (*Reichsgau Danzig-Westpreussen*). This area was divided into three regencies: Gdańsk (Danzig), Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) and Bydgoszcz (Bromberg). Total surface area was equal 26,056 sq. km, of which 21,237 sq. km was the former Polish territory. The second new land, established on the territory incorporated to the Reich, was initially called Land of Poznań (*Reichsgau Posen*), to be then renamed to the Land of Warta river (*Reichsgau Wartheland*). This land encompassed the area of the Polish region of Wielkopolska. In the subsequent phase this land was extended by addition of the counties

¹ In the years 1939–1941 there were boundary shifts within the Lithuanian-Belarusian borderland. Conform to the agreement between Molotov and Ribbentrop the region of Vilna was supposed to be given over to Lithuania. In the framework of the first pact (August 23rd, 1939) Lithuania was to belong to the German zone of influence. The second pact (September 28th, 1939) stipulated its inclusion into the Soviet zone. In connection with these decisions, in 1939 Lithuania obtained 6,880 sq. km of land, with Vilna. Then, after Lithuania was formally incorporated in July 1940 into the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian-Belarusian boundary was shifted eastwards and the territory of Lithuania increased by further 2,600 sq km.

² After the conquest of Poland a discussion took place within the German authorities, concerning the establishment of the eastern boundaries of the Reich. The minimalist and the maximalist options were considered. The first one stipulated the incorporation into the Reich of the areas lost owing to the decisions of the peace Treaty of Versailles, along with a narrow strategic belt, adjacent to the old boundaries of the German Empire. The latter variant envisaged important territorial annexations and was accepted by Hitler. A large part of central Poland, including Lodz, was incorporated, along with northern Masovia, Dąbrowa Coal Basin, Żywiec Region, etc. In view of the significance of the monastery of Jasna Góra (shrine of Black Madonna) in Częstochowa, the annexation of this town was given up, but the new boundary ran very close to it.

of Gostynin (Gasten), Kutno, Łask, Lodz with the city of Lodz, and Łęczycza (Leutschütz), as well as the western parts of the counties of Brzeziny, Piotrków and Radomsko. After these administrative changes the Land of Warta had the area of 43,942 sq. km and was divided into three regencies: Poznań (Posen), Inowrocław (Hohensalza) and Lodz (Łuczak 1993, pp. 94–95). The remaining Polish territories, annexed to the Reich, located in the southern part, were included in the Upper Silesian province (*Provinz Oberschlesien*). A part of them was incorporated in the regency of Opole (Oppeln), while the rest formed the regency of Katowice (Kattowitz). Besides, the northern counties of the region of Masovia were incorporated in East Prussia. A new regency was formed out of them, having the surface area of 16,144 sq. km, with the capital in Ciechanów³ (Zichenau).

The eastern boundary of the area included in the German Reich stretched from the Slovak border to the East of Żywiec (Saybusch), then crossed the river Vistula between Cracow and Oświęcim (Auschwitz), turned towards the North, passed in the direct vicinity of Częstochowa (Tschenstochau), leaving the town

³ On the territory included directly in the Third Reich, altogether eight regencies were established, subdivided into counties (*Kreise*). As of January 1941 the following units of county level (with urban counties being included in their respective landed counties) formed the eight regencies:

- Regency of Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) consisted of the counties of Brodnica (Strasburg), Grudziądz (Graudenz), Kwidzyn (Marienwerder), Lipno (Leipe), Lubawa (Löbau), Malbork (Marienburg), Rypin (Rippin), Susz (Rosenberg), Sztum (Stuhm) and Wąbrzeźno (Briesen);
- Regency of Gdańsk (Danzig) was composed of the counties of Chojnice (Konitz), Elbląg (Elbing), Gdańsk (Danzig), Kartuzy (Karthaus), Kościerzyna (Berent), Nowy Dwór (Grosses Werder), Starogard (Pr. Stargard), Tczew (Dirschau) and Wejherowo (Neustadt);
- Regency of Bydgoszcz (Bromberg): Bydgoszcz (Bromberg), Chełmno (Kulm), Sępólno (Zempelburg), Świecie (Schwetz), Toruń (Thorn) and Wyrzysk (Wirsitz).
- Regency of Ciechanów (Zichenau): Ciechanów (Zichenau), Maków (Mackein), Mława (Mielau), Ostrołęka (Scharfenwiese), Płock (Schröttersburg), Płońsk (Plöhnen), Przasnysz (Prashnitz), Pułtusk (Ostenburg) and Sierpc (Sichelberg).
- Regency of Poznań (Posen): Chodzież (Kolmar), Czarnków (Scharnikau), Gostyń (Gostingen), Jarocin (Jarotschin), Kościan (Kosten), Krotoszyn (Krotoschin), Leszno (Lissa), Międzybóże (Brinbau), Nowy Tomyśl (Neutomischel), Oborniki (Oberniki), Poznań (Posen), Rawicz (Rawitzch), Szamotuły (Sampter), Śrem (Schrimm), Środa (Schroda), Wolsztyn (Wollstein) and Września (Wreschen);
- Regency of Inowrocław (Hohensalza): Aleksandrów Kujawski (Hermannsbad), Gniezno (Gnesen), Gostynin (Gasten), Inowrocław (Hohensalza), Koło (Warthbrücken), Konin (Konin), Kutno (Kutno), Mogilno (Mogilno), Szubin (Schubin), Włocławek (Leslau), Wągrowiec (Wongrowitz) and Żnin (Dietfurt);
- Regency of Łódź (Lodz, Litzmannstadt): Kalisz (Kalisch), Kępno (Kempen), Łask (Lask), Łęczycza (Leutschütz), Łódź (Lodz, Litzmannstadt), Ostrów (Ostrowo), Sieradz (Schieratz), Turek (Turek) and Wieluń (Welungen);
- Regency of Katowice (Kattowitz): Będzin (Bendsburg), Bielsko-Biała (Bielitz-Biala), Bytom (Ben-then), Chrzanów (Krenau), Cieszyn (Teschen), Gliwice (Gleiwitz), Katowice (Kattowitz), Olkusz (Olkenau), Pszczyna (Pless), Rybnik (Rybnik), Tarnowskie Góry (Tarnowitz), Toszek (Tost) and Żywiec (Saybusch) (Trzebiński, 1955, pp. 46–48).

On the occupied territories Germans usually preserved the former Polish administrative breakdown into counties (poviats). There were changes in the boundaries of these counties, which were cut across by the boundary of the General Gouvernement or the state boundary with the Soviet Union. In some cases two counties were joined to form one. In general, the areas situated on two sides of the pre-war Polish-German border were not included in one county. The former boundaries of the Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig) have not been changed. Within this territory two rural counties were established (Gdańsk and Nowy Dwór)(Danzig and Grosser Werder), and two urban counties (Gdańsk and Sopot [Zoppot]).

on the eastern side of the border. Then it went northwards, approaching Vistula close to Wyszogród. The areas around Wieluń (Welungen), Sieradz (Schieratz), Zduńska Wola (Freihaus), Brzeziny (Lowenstadt), Głowno (Glowno), Kutno (Kutno), and the city of Lodz, were also incorporated in the Reich. Close to the confluence of Bzura and Vistula the border turned perpendicularly to the East, reaching Nowy Dwór and Serock. Farther on it went in parallel to the river Narew, attaining in the neighbourhood of Ostrołęka the Soviet-German demarcation line. The farther course of the border along Narew and Pisa was identical with the demarcation line dividing the two occupied parts of Poland.

With the consecutive decree of 12 October 1939 the German authorities established the position of General Governor for the occupied areas encompassing the central part of Poland, located between the new eastern border of the German Reich, and the boundary line having appeared owing to the agreement between Ribbentrop and Molotov. Thus, the so-called General Gouvernement was created, commonly referred to as General Governorship*. Its eastern border was constituted on the entire length by the Soviet-German demarcation line. This particular decree made yet an explicit reference to the occupied territories of Poland. With the subsequent decree, of 15 August 1940, even this reference disappeared. The words "occupied Polish territories" were omitted, and only the term "General Gouvernement" was used. From the legal point of view this meant that starting with 15 August 1940 the Third German Reich treated Polish lands as ultimately conquered and incorporated into its territory.

The Soviet occupant authorities, aiming to "legalise" the annexation, carried out "elections" to the so-called People's Conventions of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine. These "elections" took place on October 22nd, 1939. They were preceded by a propaganda campaign, meant to intimidate the local population. The newly elected representations passed on October 27th, 1939 in Lwów and on October 29th, 1939, in Białystok, petitions for the "inclusion into the Soviet Union of the territories of the former Polish state, liberated by the Soviet army". The Extraordinary Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR did on November 1st and 2nd, 1939, incorporate officially the "Western Ukraine" and "Western Belarus" into, respectively, the Ukrainian SSR and the Belarusian SSR. Then, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet granted on November 29th, 1939, Soviet citizenship to all the inhabitants of the annexed territories. Simultaneously, it was assumed that the western and central parts of Poland, occupied by the Wehrmacht military forces, constitute an integral part of the German Reich, and the demarcation line, established on September 28th, 1939, was treated as the German-Soviet border. Hence, the Soviet authorities, similarly as the German ones, assumed that the Polish state ceased to exist. This fact had essential political and legal consequences for all the former citizens of Poland.

* The official term of "General Gouvernement", assumed by the Nazis, is in most places in this book replaced by "General Governorship", being both literal translation of the way, in which this entity was called in Poland during the war, and being less artificial in English than the official designation (transl.).

After the above outlined formal-legal mock procedure had been ended, and the eastern lands of the Polish Commonwealth* had been incorporated into the Soviet Union, a new administrative division was introduced on December 4th, 1939. The borderline between the Ukrainian and Belarusian republics ran approximately along the northern boundary of the Polish pre-war voivodship of Volhynia, or the Russian tsarist 19th century governorship of Volhynia. This fact caused a dissatisfaction of the authorities of the Ukrainian republic in Kiev, who demanded inclusion in the Ukrainian SSR of the entire region of Polesie. This claim was motivated by the bigger similarity of the dialects of native population of Polesie to the Ukrainian than to the Belarusian language. The decision of the Kremlin, though, did not change. In place of the Polish voivodships (of Białystok, Polesie, Nowogródek and partly Vilna) five districts were established on the territory incorporated into the Belarusian SSR – of Baranowicze, Białystok, Brześć, Pińsk and Wilejka. On the areas, incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR, four Polish voivodships were liquidated (of Lwów, Volhynia, Tarnopol and Stanisławów), and six districts were established: Drohobycz, Lwów, Równe, Stanisławów, Tarnopol and Volhynia.

According to the estimates the population number of Poland as of 31 August 1939, on the eve of the World War II, was at 35,339,000. The areas occupied by the German Reich were inhabited by 22,140,000 persons, while the Soviet zone – by 13,199,000 persons (*Mały Rocznik...*, 1941, p. 5). In the western part the population of Polish nationality and Polish language dominated, while in the zone occupied by the Soviet Union the ethnic structure was highly complex. Despite the fact that altogether the non-Polish population dominated, there were many Poles, who played on these areas quite a significant demographic, social and economic role. That is why, just after having incorporated eastern Poland, the Soviet authorities started the action aiming at de-Polonisation of these areas. With the purpose of achieving this objective the deportations and persecutions of Polish population were soon started.

The German occupant authorities conducted different policies with respect to the population inhabiting the areas included in the Reich, and with respect to the population living in General Governorship. This fact had significant demographic consequences. On the areas incorporated into the Reich it was intended to liquidate the Polish element in national terms. On the territory of the General Governorship, in turn, this was to take place at a later date. That is why the resettlements of the population on the areas incorporated into the Reich had ampler dimensions and were carried out more ruthlessly. The German-Soviet conflict changed diametrically the political situation. In the time period of just a fortnight all the former voivodships of the pre-war Poland were under German occupation. The demarcation line, established on September 28th, 1939, ceased

* Polish language uses, with respect to Poland, and the historical Polish-Lithuanian state, the translation of the Latin *Res publica* – that is: *Rzeczpospolita*, which, translated back literally to English would be: *The common thing*. We chose to use the term *Commonwealth* known in English language, which bears largely the same meaning and derives from the same origin. The notion of the 2nd Commonwealth is commonly used to refer to Poland of between-the-world-wars (transl.).

to exist. The Nazi authorities introduced new administrative divisions on the newly occupied areas. Thus, the decision of 1 August 1941 stipulated that the former Polish voivodships of Stanisławów and Tarnopol, as well as the eastern part of the former voivodship of Lwów with the city of Lwów (L'viv) itself were incorporated into the General Governorship. A new district, called Galicia, was formed out of these territories⁴. The pre-war voivodship of Białystok, and the north-eastern counties of the voivodship of Warsaw, occupied since September 1939 by the Soviets, were incorporated, after having been taken over by the Nazi troops, directly into the Reich⁵. The remaining eastern lands of the Polish Commonwealth (the regions of Volhynia and Polesie) were included in the Reich Commissariat Ukraine, while the regions of Vilna and Nowogródek – in the Reich Commissariat East (*Ostland*) (see Fig. II.3).

The subsequent political and administrative changes were associated with the military catastrophe of Germany, the marching of the Soviet army into Poland, and the decisions of the superpowers, regarding the post-war boundaries, taken in Teheran and in Yalta (the eastern boundary of Poland), as well as in Potsdam (the western boundary of Poland).

The new, post-war Polish eastern border was determined approximately according to the so-called Curzon Line. It divided in the North the pre-war voivodship of Białystok in such a way that two counties (Grodno and Wołkowysk) were incorporated in the Belarusian SSR. On the other hand, the western part of the Białystok voivodship and the three north-eastern counties of the Warsaw voivodship became an integral part of Poland. Along this segment of the border a significant shift eastwards took place with respect to the demarcation line established in the agreement concluded in September 1939 by Ribbentrop and Molotov. The central part of the new eastern border of Poland went along the river Bug. Over this segment it was the same as the eastern boundary of the General Governorship. There were some small changes with respect to the demarcation line in the southern part. Thus, of the pre-war Lwów (L'viv) voivodship, Poland regained the county of Lubaczów, a large part of the Jarosław county, the county of Przemyśl with the city of Przemyśl, partly the county of Dobromil, and small parts of the counties of Sokal, Rawa Ruska and Jaworów. This territory was inhabited in 1939 by altogether 1,342,800 persons.

⁴ The decision of the incorporation of the District of Galicia into the General Gouvernement was announced on August 1st, 1941. It was the evidence that the Nazi authorities do not intend to establish an independent Ukrainian state. The administration of the General Gouvernement introduced yet in Fall of 1941 a modification of the boundary between the districts of Cracow and Galicia. The former was enlarged by inclusion of 34 municipalities from the latter, having belonged to the counties of Brzozów, Dobromil, Jarosław, Lesko, Przemyśl and Sanok. On the other hand, two municipalities from the county of Lesko were transferred to the district of Galicia. The area of the district of Galicia decreased by 2,338 sq. km down to 47,100 sq. km (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 77).

⁵ The so-called District of Białystok, having surface area of 31,400 sq. km, was incorporated into the Reich. It encompassed the pre-war voivodship of Białystok as well as small fragments of the voivodships of Warsaw, Nowogródek and Polesie. After 1945 two thirds of the district of Białystok were again included in the Polish territory, while its eastern part was incorporated into the Belarusian SSR.



Fig. II.3. Political-administrative division of Polish territories in 1943

The new Polish-Soviet border was finally established at the Moscow conference on 16 August 1945. Thus, a new dividing line was established, crossing the territory of the pre-war Poland, this line having become the eastern boundary of Poland. The entire area to the East of the line was incorporated in the USSR. This fact brought highly significant consequences for the population living to the East of the new political divide. These people, namely, formally lost their Polish citizenship. The so-called repatriation agreements were signed between Poland and the Soviet Union with the aim of ethnic unification of the areas situated on both sides of the Curzon line, making it possible for the Polish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian population to move across the border.

The very significant territorial losses of Poland in the East were compensated for with the gains in the West, at the expense of Germany. Yet, despite this compensation the total area of Poland decreased from 389,700 sq. km to 312,600 sq. km. The new western and northern boundaries of Poland were determined on the basis of decisions taken by the three victorious powers. Germany lost to Poland the areas situated between the Polish-German border established in Versailles

after the World War I and the new border on the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers. These were the areas of the entire regencies of Opole (Oppeln), Wrocław (Breslau), Koszalin (Köslin), and large parts of the regencies of Szczecin (Stettin), Frankfurt (on Odra river), and Legnica (Liegnitz). Besides, Poland gained the entire territory of the Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig), as well as the southern part of East Prussia (the regencies of Olsztyn [Allenstein] and Kwidzyn [Marienwerder], and the southern parts of the regencies of Królewiec [Königsberg, Kaliningrad], and Gąbin [Gumbinnen, Gusiew]).

The consecutive shifts of the boundaries, outlined here, caused that in the years 1939–1945, that is – during just six years – the administrative shape of the central part of Europe, situated between the Soviet empire and the Third German Reich, underwent revolutionary changes. World War II, of which Winston Churchill said that it was a continuation of the first one, started from the liquidation of the Polish state. Common boundary between the realms of Stalin and Hitler was established. This boundary persisted for just 21 months. The initial phase of the conflict between the two former allies gave rise to a new geopolitical order, associated with the reorganisation of the political-administrative divisions, introduced by the German Nazi authorities. Four years later this vast part of the European continent, up to river Elbe in the West, was conquered by the victorious Red Army. Resulting from these military events a new Polish state emerged, with limited sovereignty, and with newly determined political boundaries (see Fig. II.4).

Inclusion of the newly gained (“regained”) Western and Northern Lands into the Polish territory has been taking place successively, depending upon the movement of the military operations towards the West. Immediately after the German troops would withdraw and the Soviet army took the area, the temporary Polish administration units were installed. New Polish authorities, seated first in Lublin, and then in Warsaw, were aware of the fact that Poland, having lost vast territories in the East, would gain new lands in the West. So, there was no waiting for the formal acceptance of the superpowers, since it was held that they would fully accept the deeds and the legal situation established. Decision of the Polish Council of Ministers of March 14th, 1945, stipulated that the areas of eastern Germany, to be incorporated into Poland, were divided into four administrative units: Opole (Oppeln) Silesia, subordinated to the Governor of Silesia in Katowice (Kattowitz), Lower Silesia, East Prussia (the Masurian district) and Western Pomerania. They were administered by the representatives of the Government. The very first new voivodship established was the voivodship of Gdańsk (Danzig), which was created on March 30th, 1945, by associating the former Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig) and six counties of the pre-war Polish voivodship of Pomerania. All the decision taken had temporary character, until the Potsdam conference, which determined ultimately the new western boundary of Poland. In the first half of 1946 a new, unified administrative organisation was established on the Western and Northern Lands, composed, like generally in Poland, of provinces, counties and municipalities.

The territory acquired by Poland included eastern Germany, with the area of 100,943 sq km, and the Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig), with the area of 1,893 sq. km (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 29). This large territory was inhabited in

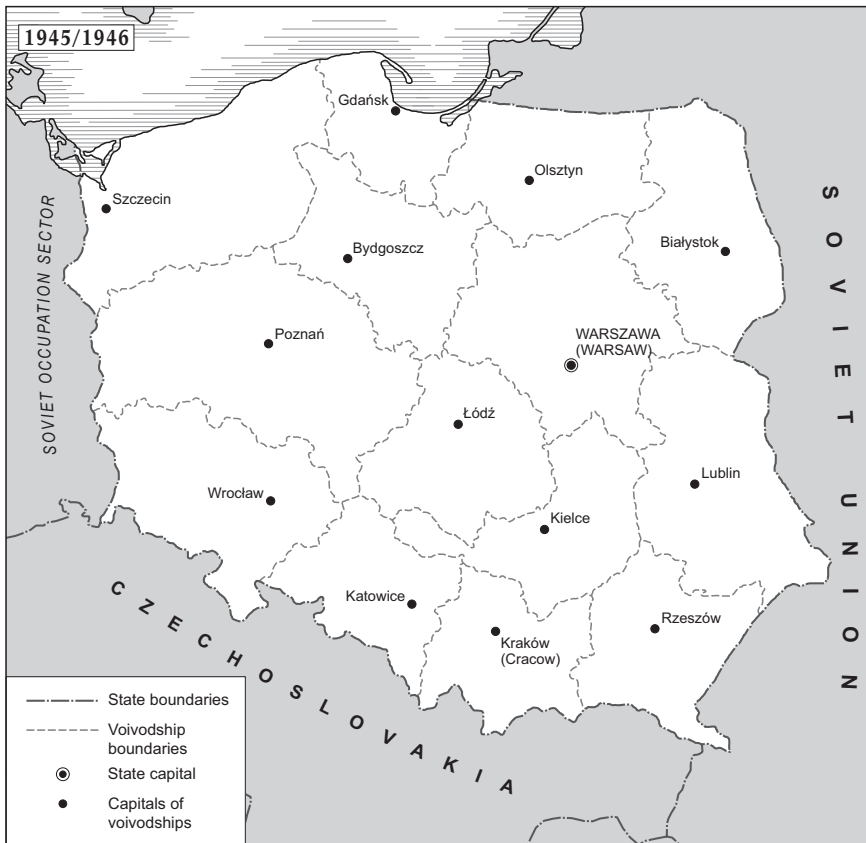


Fig. II.4. Political-administrative division of Poland at the turn of the year 1946

1931 by 8,381,700 persons, and then in 1939 – by 8,855,000 persons (Dziewoński, Kosiński, 1967, p. 54). Except for the western part of Upper Silesia, the eastern part of the region of Opole (Oppeln), and a part of Warmia and Masuria, the rest of this area had a uniform German character. The decision was taken at the Potsdam conference, by the victorious powers, of resettling the entire German population having inhabited the area that fell to Poland after the World War II. This decision, of enormous consequences, was carried out. The statistical data presented show that the territory bounded on the East by the Polish-Soviet border determined in the Treaty of Riga of 1921 and on the West by the new, post-war western border of Poland, stretching along the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers, was inhabited in 1931 by 40,489,000 persons, and in 1939 – by 44,194,000 persons of Polish, German or the Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig) citizenships (see Fig. II.5).

The fate of this entire population during the World War II was dramatic. Enormous masses of people inhabiting this territory were subject to extermination or deportations. Likewise, millions of people, not having changed their residence, became the citizens of some other state.

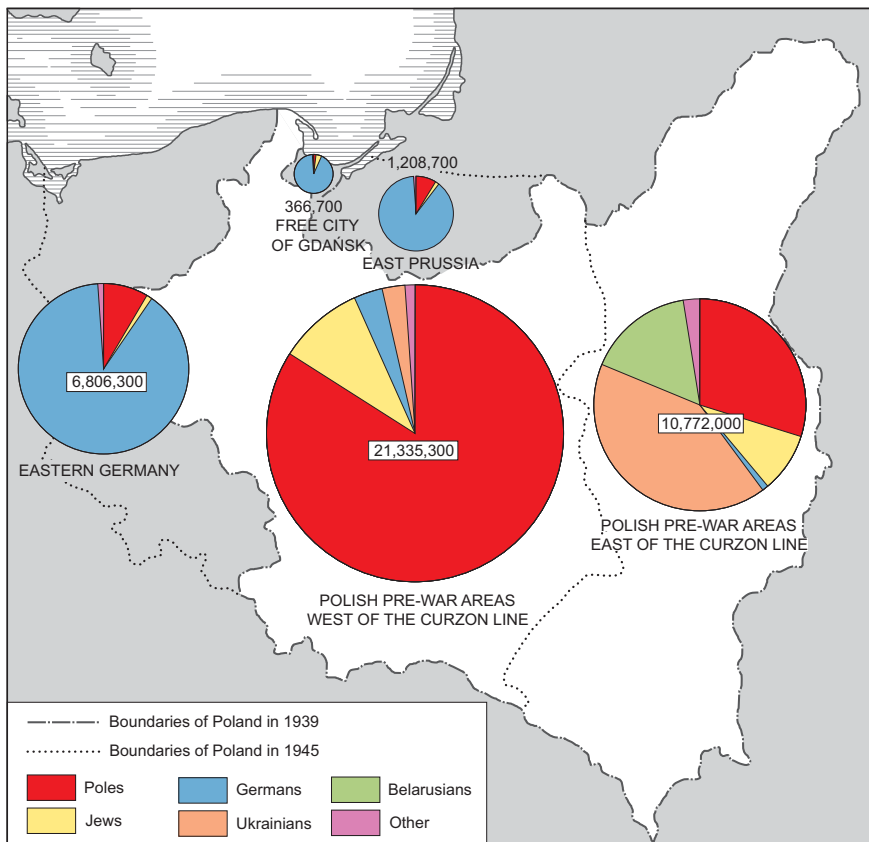


Fig. II.5. Ethnic structure of the populations inhabiting the areas situated between the eastern boundary of Poland as of 1939 and the western boundary of Poland as of 1946, according to the state as of 1931/1933
Source: own elaboration.

The demographic losses were selective in ethnic terms, and also in terms of the location of residence. The most acute were the losses of the Jewish population, which was almost entirely exterminated due to the planned holocaust undertaken by the Nazi authorities. Large losses were also suffered by the Polish and German populations. A significant part of the population, who survived the hardships and the dramatic events of the war, was forced to abandon their places of residence. This kind of exodus affected in a particular manner the German population, but a lot of Poles, as well, due to the border shifts, were subject to important resettlement actions. The great migration waves, taking place during the decade of 1939–1949, had a diversified temporal course. The intensity of population movements, taking various forms (resettlement, expulsion, flight, deportation), changed depending upon the military situation and the decisions of authorities in power at a given time instant. Migrations affected in various phases of war

people of different ethnic, national or religious origins. All these are apparently known things, but as we pass over to systematic assessment, and especially to quantitative estimations, it turns out that our knowledge is quite limited. There exist numerous myths and false convictions in this domain, functioning in a persistent manner in the social consciousness. On the other hand, the literature of the subject contains numerous analytical elaborates concerning the detailed issues, while the quantified synthetic reports are missing. In addition, the problem was mainly taken up by the historians, for whom the spatial and demographic dimensions were of lesser importance. That is why it appears to be purposeful to carry out a statistical geographical assessment of all the more important migrations of political character, which took place on the Polish lands in the period of World War II. Not all of these population movements can be precisely quantified. Interpretation of these movements may also be ambiguous. Yet, it is beyond doubt that these “great wanderings of the peoples” changed completely the demographic and ethnic situation of Poland.

III. POLITICAL MIGRATIONS ON POLISH LANDS IN THE YEARS 1939–1950

III.1. Movements of population caused by the September 1939 Defensive Campaign

The aggression against Poland from the side of the Nazi Germany on September 1st, 1939, followed by the invasion by the Soviet Army of the Polish eastern territories on September 17th, 1939, triggered off immediately mass movements of the population. In the first phase of the German-Polish war thousands of people, residing in western and central Poland, started a spontaneous flight before the approaching German army. In view of the very rapid advancement of the front line, the evacuation action soon ended and the population started to return to their places of residence. It is estimated that during the five-week military operations some 66,000 Polish soldiers and officers were killed, died of wounds and were otherwise lost, while the number of wounded was at 130,000 (Tazbir, 1980, p. 675)¹. The losses among the civilian population have not been estimated until today. Essential migration-related consequences were brought about by the establishment of the demarcation line, dividing the areas under the German and Soviet occupation.

The movements of the population across the demarcation line were distinctly selective. Jewish population would largely escape to the East, fearing German persecutions. On the other hand, the persons moving towards the West were mainly Poles, especially the representatives of the owning class, who feared repressions from the side of the Soviet occupants. The scale of these movements is hard to estimate, since various sources quote different values. Conform to the not too precise Soviet data some 300,000 persons having lived before on the areas occupied by the Third Reich moved to the Soviet occupation zone. On the other hand, the demarcation line was supposedly crossed from the eastern side by several dozen thousand people.

¹ According to some authors (e.g. Gawryszewski, 2005, p. 434) these losses were higher and amounted to as many as 175,000 killed Polish soldiers. It can be supposed that this estimate is too high.

The approaching collapse of the Polish state, and in a particular manner the news that the Red Army marched into the territory of the Commonwealth, brought about a wave of emigration to the neutral countries, neighbouring with Poland, and not involved in the conflict, that is – to Romania, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia.

In the early morning hours of 18 September 1939 the President of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki, Polish Government, and the Commander-in-Chief, Marshall Edward Śmigły-Rydz, crossed the Polish-Romanian border. Polish authorities were interned. At the same time, masses of migrants as well as regular Polish troops started to flow into Romania. According to the state as of 22 September 1939 there were 20,845 Polish military in Romania (including 1,259 officers and 19,586 privates). Some sources estimate that approximately 30,000 Polish soldiers found refuge in Romania in September 1939, including the entire staff of the chief headquarters. There were 9,276 persons of the air force staff, with 1,491 air officers (Willaume, 1981, pp. 77–78). Polish soldiers and civilian population have been moving into Romania until the end of October. According to the data of the Polish Red Cross, the flight of some 40 thousand Polish civilians from Poland was recorded. It is difficult to establish the precise number of Poles having crossed the Polish-Romanian border. The estimates vary, ranging between 50 and 100 thousand refugees (with 30 to 60 thousand soldiers in this number).

The Romanian authorities organised special camps for Polish soldiers. One of the first such camps, meant for 20,000 soldiers, was the one in Tîrgoviște. Thereafter, smaller camps were established – in Tîrgu-Jiu, Coracal, Sarat, Slatina, Calafat, Pistra, Corabia, Halmei, etc. Poles treated their stay in Romania as a transitory one and started to organise planned as well as spontaneous evacuation from Romania, trying to get over various routes to France. Until the end of October, 3,842 persons of military personnel left Romania. Then, until December 31st, 1939, altogether 11,457 persons left Romania in an organised manner, while in January – 4,145 persons. Hence, in February 1940 only 7,271 of the Polish interned military staff remained in Romanian camps (Willaume, 1981, p. 81).

The military catastrophe of Poland brought about also a mass flight to the friendly Hungary. Thus, several full Polish military detachments crossed the then Polish-Hungarian border. These were, in particular, the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade, a part of the 11th Carpathian Division, the complete detachments of the 3rd Brigade of Mountain Fusiliers, and so on. They were disarmed and interned. The mass exodus of Poles lasted until the middle of October 1939. The number of Polish refugees, both military and civil ones, who came to Hungary, is hard to establish. The estimates range between 50,000 and 110,000, and reach even 140,000. It can be expected that the lower estimates are closer to reality (Wieliczko, 1977, p. 92). Similarly as in Romania, the action started of evacuation of the Polish military to France or to the Middle East. Until June 1940 as many as 21,000 of the military staff left Hungary (of whom – in March 1940: 3,967 persons, and in April: 4,461 persons). The remaining ones either stayed in Hungary over the entire period of war, or were transported to Germany, or returned during the occupation time to Poland.

Crossing of the Polish-Lithuanian border by the military and civil refugees started on September 17th, 1939, and lasted until the end of September. The first information on the number of Poles interned by the Lithuanian authorities is dated 26th September 1939. At that time there were 12,767 Polish soldiers in the transitory camps, of whom 2,487 military officers and 500 police officers. The number of the interned did not change much. According to the data of the Lithuanian Red Cross 14,000 persons were interned. During the subsequent months the number of the interned decreased (Vilkialis, 1995, p. 317). A part of those interned in Lithuania returned on their own will to their permanent residence locations in the Soviet zone (1,700 soldiers) and in the German zone (1,600 soldiers). Some 3,000 of the interned escaped from the camps. After Lithuania had been taken over by the Red Army there were still 4,373 interned Polish military, who were transported to the Soviet Union (Vilkialis, 1995, p. 321).

In view of the peripheral location of this segment of the border, the least number of Polish citizens went to neutral Latvia as the result of the defeat in the September 1939 war. Some 3–4 thousand soldiers and several thousand civil refugees from the region of Vilna crossed the border with Latvia. Their fates differed considerably. Only few were able to make it to Sweden. After the Red Army marched in, numerous military were transported to the Soviet camps. A group of the civilian persons returned to Poland. The remaining ones found jobs in Latvia.

It is difficult to give a precise number of the overall number of Polish refugees, who stayed for a shorter or longer period after the September campaign in the four neutral countries, neighbouring upon pre-war Poland. The most probable estimates oscillate around the number of 150,000. This number included to a large extent officers and privates of the Polish army, whose later fates were highly dramatic. A large part of them were evacuated – owing to the efforts of the Polish government in exile – at the turn of the year 1940 to France (some 40 thousand) or the Middle East – to Syria, Palestine and Cyprus (some 8 thousand). More than ten thousand military succeeded in making their way in an unofficial manner to the West from Hungary, Romania and the Baltic States. Some 6 thousand persons returned to Poland. The remaining ones (roughly 20 thousand), after the German army entered the respective countries, were transported to the POW camps in Germany (Piesowicz, 1988b, p. 95).

According to Polish estimates, at the turn of October 1939 there were some 650,700 POWs from the Polish army, taken prisoners by the Germans and the Soviets. Of those, 230,700 were taken by the Red Army (Łuczak, 1993, pp. 32–33). Thus, if we account for the refugees, who escaped to the neutral countries, some 900,000 young men found themselves in a very difficult situation, far from their places of residence, as the result of the defeat in the September campaign (see Fig. III.1).

According to the already mentioned Polish data, the number of Polish POWs taken by the Germans was 420,000 – officers and privates. Conform to the official German documentation the number of the Polish military that were taken prisoners would be 694,000, of whom around 30 thousand officers. Some 10,000 of these POWs died of wounds after being taken prisoners. Then, 140,000 of them were released. Hence, altogether 544,000 military of the former Polish army

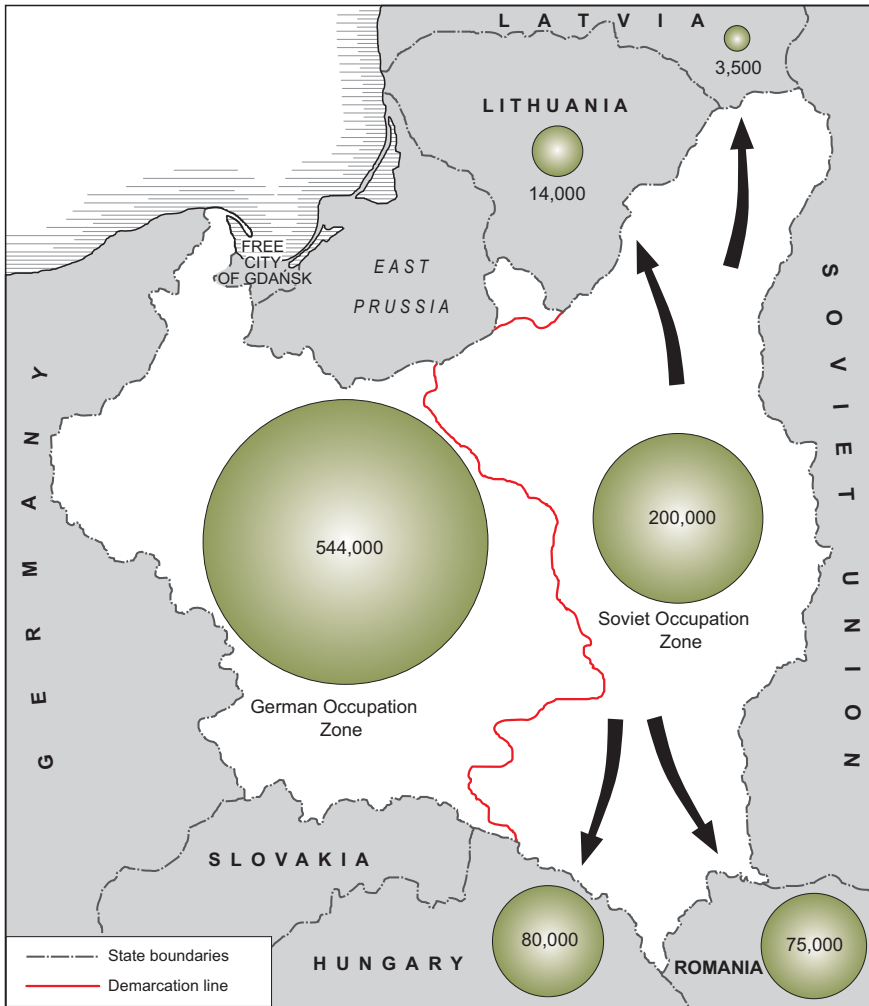


Fig. III.1. Polish military taken prisoners of war by the Germans and Soviets, as well as refugees to the neutral countries after the defeat of September 1939

Source: own elaboration.

remained POWs of the Germans (Pollack, 1982, p. 14). After the termination of military activities a part of the POWs were liberated. In October and November 1939 the prisoners of German, Ukrainian and Belarusian nationalities were released. Besides, Germans released also several tens of thousands of Jews, who were afterwards in their vast majority killed in the Holocaust.

After taking prisoners, the Germans would separate the officers from the privates, and directed them to the rallying points, from where they were transported to the transition camps (*Durchgangslager*). They were established in Poland or

on the eastern territories of the Reich. The POWs were then transported from the transition camps to the permanent camps, located deeper within the German territory. Officers were placed in the so-called *oflags* (officer camps), while privates and non-coms in the so-called *stalags*. In 1939 altogether 37 *stalags* were established. Their number changed in the consecutive years (1940 – 40 *stalag* camps, 1941 – 63 camps, 1943 – 49, and 1944 – 47)². Polish officers were kept in 1941 in twelve *oflag* camps, in 1942 – in ten, in 1943 – in seven, and in 1944–45 – in four large camps³.

Because of the shortage of labour force in the war economy, Hitler issued in the spring of 1940 a decree, in which he ordered to change the status of Polish privates and officers, and to employ them within the Third Reich. Owing to this decision some 140,000 Polish military were directed to work in the German economy in the years 1940–1942. This was equivalent to depriving them of the rights proper for the POWs and of the assistance from the International Red Cross. Thereby also the number of the interned in the POW camps decreased.

On the basis of reports sent to the International Red Cross it can be stated that in September 1944 there were 36,666 Polish privates and non-coms as well as 17,023 officers in the German camps. Thus, the total was 53,689 (Pollack, 1982, p. 17). In October 1944 the camps took in several thousand Polish soldiers interned in Hungary. At the same time more than 16,000 participants of the Warsaw Uprising reached the POW camps as well. Consequently, the number of Polish POWs increased to 73,000 (20,000 officers and 53,000 privates and non-coms). These numbers do not account for the Polish soldiers taken prisoners in the course of the French campaign in 1940 (15,000 persons) nor the prisoners from the Polish People's Army, fighting along with the Red Army, nor those from the Polish Armed Forces in the West.

The distribution and the situation of Polish officers and soldiers staying in the German POW camps are the subject of a rich literature and do not require a more detailed consideration. On the other hand, the fate of the Polish POWs remaining in captivity on the Soviet side had been until 1990 subject to censorship. There were numerous publications on this subject, appearing in the West, but they were not very precise. It was only after it became possible to consult a part of the Soviet archives that our knowledge started to be sufficient to show in a quantified manner the movements and the situation of the Polish POWs, taken prisoners by the Red Army in September 1939. The most consistent account, based on source material, is the report of A. Głowacki (1992), who studied the archival materials existing in Moscow. On the basis of this study and the publication of N. Lebedeva (1997) one can attempt a complete presentation of the fate of Polish POWs in the East.

² Polish soldiers were kept, in particular, in the following *stalags*: I A and I B Hohenstein, II A Neubrandenburg, IIIC Alt Drewitz, IV A Hohenstein, IV B Mühlberg (Elbe), V D Strasburg, VIII B Lamsdorf, VIII C Kunau, IX C Bad Sulza, XI Altengrabow, XI B Fallingbostel, XIII D Nürnberg, XVII B Gneisendorf (Krems), XVII C Markt Pongau (camps numbered according to military districts).

³ These four large *oflag* camps were II C Woldenberg, II D Gross-Born, VI B Doessel, and VII A Murnau.

According to the Soviet data, more than 200,000 Polish officers and privates were Soviet prisoners after the aggression was over. At that time, POW camps were established at the orders from L. Beria for 41,000 interned. At the beginning of October the organised POW camps could still admit only 68,000 persons. This is the most probable explanation for the release of the privates and non-coms residing on the territories situated to the East of the German-Soviet demarcation line. The respective decision entailed the release of 42,400 privates and non-coms. Until October 1st, 1939, the rallying points took over from the detachments of the Red Army 99,149 POWs, of whom 77,675 were then sent to the triage camps (Lebedeva, 1997, p. 72). Due to the subsequent decision of the Council

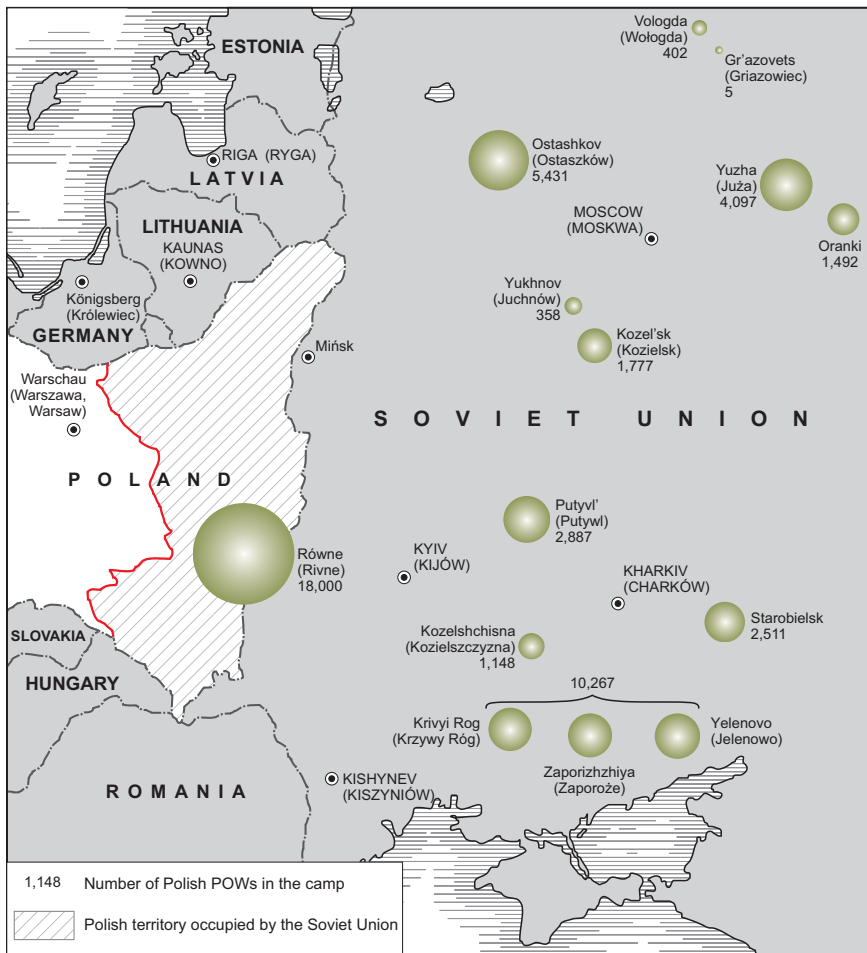


Fig. III.2. Polish POW camps on the territory of the Soviet Union on 30 October 1939

Source: own elaboration.

of People's Commissars of October 1939 some 33,000 Polish POWs (without officers) were turned over to the German side as the inhabitants of the areas occupied by the Nazis. Until 19 November 1939 ultimately 43,472 Polish POWs were turned over to the Germans. On the other hand – the German authorities turned over until 14 November 1939 to the Soviets 13,757 POWs originating from the eastern parts of the 2nd Commonwealth. A part of the Polish POWs – 10,377 persons – were directed to work in the mines of the Iron Ore Basin of Krivyi Rog. Another group of prisoners was employed in construction of the road Nowogród Wołyński–Równe–Brody–Lwów (L'viv). For this purpose a large camp was set up in Równe, in which 18,000 prisoners were kept as of October 30th, 1939. As of August 20th, 1940, there were 14,556 Polish POWs employed at the construction of this road. The total number of Polish prisoners in the camps established in October 1939 was 56,787, and this number was gradually decreasing (see Table III.1, Fig. III.2).

Table III.1. Numbers of Polish POWs in the camps of NKVD* between October and December 1939

POW camps	As of:			
	30.10.1939	10.11.1939	10.12.1939	31.12.1939
Starobielsk	2,511	3,926	3,907	3,916
Ostashkov	5,431	5,774	5,961	6,291
Kozel'sk	1,777	4,628	4,726	4,766
Putyvl'	2,887	71	–	–
Oranki	1,492	9	–	–
Vologda	402	3	–	–
Kozelshchisna	1,148	4	–	–
Yukhnov	358	36	421	114
Gr'azovets	5	5	–	–
Yuzha	4,097	233	–	–
Totals for the POW camps	20,108	14,689	15,015	15,087
Admission points	8,412	5,063	–	–
Równe	18,000	15,113	14,084	13,297
Metallurgic plants ¹	10,267	10,370	10,337	10,326
Grand totals	56,787	45,235	39,436	38,710

* NKVD (*Narodnaya Komissyia Vnutrennykh D'el*) – People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, dealing mainly with political dissent and largely responsible for the camp system in the USSR.

¹ a number of POW camps located in eastern Ukraine in: Krivyi Rog, Bol'shoie Zaporizhziya, and Yel'no-Karakubskiy.

Source: Głowacki (1992).

The subsequent changes were associated with the liquidation of three large camps – in Starobielsk, Ostashkov and Kozel'sk – and the extermination of the Polish officers from these camps. During two months (April–May 1940) altogether

14,587 Polish POWs were killed (of whom 6,287 were from Ostashkov, 4,404 from Kozel'sk, and 3,986 from Starobielsk). Besides, on the basis of the same decision, taken on March 5th, 1940, by the Political Bureau of the Soviet Communist Party, 7,305 military and civil persons were also executed. The prisoners having survived this massacre, as well as the Polish military interned after the annexation of the Baltic States, were concentrated primarily in the camps of Gr'azovets and Yukhnov. Then, in the consecutive camp, set up in Knyaz'Pokost, situated in the northern district of Komi, 7,754 Polish POWs were employed at the construction of the railway Kolas-Vorkuta. Camps were also established on the Kola Peninsula and in the area of Arkhangelsk, where Polish POWs worked, too, in very hard conditions.

On the basis of the documentation available, A. Głowacki (1992, p. 64) concludes that the statistical data provided are not complete, for the fate of some 60,000 Polish POWs, taken prisoners by the Soviets in the second half of September 1939, is not given account of.

The here presented data imply that the direct consequence of the September defeat was the permanent or temporal relocation of more than 700 thousand persons. They were primarily the military of the former Polish army. Besides, war entailed forced migration movements of the civil population, encompassing also hundreds of thousands of people. This was associated with large and irreversible demographic losses. These losses were selective with respect to nationality, age and gender. They affected first of all young men of Polish nationality.

III.2. Resettlements of population from the Polish lands incorporated into the Third German Reich

After the defeat of Poland, upon the orders from the highest Nazi authorities, studies were started with the aim of elaboration of the principles of policies with respect to the population inhabiting the occupied Polish territories. The first document was the elaborate, prepared in November 1939 by E. Wentzel and G. Hecht, entitled "The issue of treatment of the population inhabiting the former Polish areas from the racial-political point of view". This document was transmitted directly to Heinrich Himmler, and thereafter initially accepted by Hitler. After verification, it constituted the basis for the technical directives in the domain of planned resettlements of the Polish and Jewish population. For the implementation of the tasks entrusted with him, Himmler made use of the Main Office of Security of the Reich (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* – RSHA), subordinated to him. Chapter IV of this Office included department IVD4, dealing with preparations for the planned resettlements of Poles and Jews, and the immigration of Germans from abroad. In January the scope of competence of this office was broadened, and its tasks included also the organisation of the future holocaust of the

Jews. It was agreed that central planning of the resettlements should belong to the previously mentioned Main Office of Security of the Reich, while implementation should be carried out by the security police and the SS detachments.

On the basis of these decisions, in October 1939 the Office of Migrations North-East (*Einwandererzentralstelle Nord-Ost*) was established in Gdynia, thereafter moved to Poznan, and then yet to Lodz. A separate resettlement office was established in the Land of Warta River (*Warthegau*), where respective headquarters were established (*Sonderstab für Aussiedlung der Polen und Juden*). This unit was managed by Obersturmbannführer A. Rapp. A similar unit was created in Lodz, managed by SS-Obersturmbannführer H. A. Krumeier, and in the Gdansk Pomerania (*Gau Danzig – West Preussen*), for which SS-Hauptsturmführer F. Abromeit was responsible. The matters related to forced population movements in the General Governorship were to be managed by SS-Obergruppenführer F. W. Krüger.

In the course of formation of the administrative apparatus, the first, partly spontaneous deportation actions were started, which, over time, took on an increasingly organised character. The information here provided implies that at the very beginning of war the German side had no doubt as to the necessity and purpose of forced population movements, based on racial criteria, while the technical and organisational preparations were well advanced.

Thus, immediately after the incorporation of the western part of Poland into the Third Reich, the Nazi authorities started planned activities aiming at the relocation from these areas of a significant part of the Polish population. This program was associated with preparation of vast settlement areas for the Germans, that is – the creation of the so-called free space in the East (the *Lebensraum* – the living space). There were different concepts in this domain. According to one of them, after the victorious war with the Soviet Union, Poles were to be resettled to Western Siberia. In the framework of the hypothetical long-term plans the short-term undertakings started to be implemented, with the purpose of Germanising the areas incorporated and of removing a large part of the Polish population residing there. This task was being achieved at an uneven rate and with the use of different methods. The causes lied in the changing military situation and the appearance of new economic needs. The obstacles to the mass relocation of the Polish population were also of the objective political character, but primarily they resulted from the technical aspect. The capacities of the transport system were strictly limited due to the military operations. The necessity of rational use of labour force on place also made it more difficult to undertake radical resettlement projects. On the top of this, the authorities of the General Governorship would not make the task easier, admitting quite unwillingly the incoming transports of evacuated Poles. All this made the German authorities correct the plans and limit the scale of relocations. Yet, during the first phase of war, before the aggression against the Soviet Union, a relatively large deportation action was implemented.

The decision to Germanise the territories incorporated into the Third Reich through relocation of Poles and settling of Germans was taken on October 7th, 1939, along with the establishment of the Commissariat of the Reich for Strengthening

of the German Nationality (*Reichskommissariat für die Festigung des Deutschen Volkstums – RKFDV*) by Hitler. The position of the head of this commissariat was assumed by Heinrich Himmler, while its program was elaborated by Ulrich Greifelt (Sikora, 2009, p. 85; Koehl, 1957).

The basis for the concrete action was constituted by the personal decision of Hitler's, taken at the beginning of October, in which he entitled Himmler to start relocation of the Polish and Jewish population from Gdańsk, Gdynia and Poznań. The first resettlements affected Gdynia, from where until 26 October 1939 as many as 12,271 Poles were removed. In the subsequent decision of Himmler's of 30 October 1939, the scope of relocations from the areas incorporated into the Reich was broadened, and the dates as well as selection criteria were made more precise. The deportations were to be applied to the entire Jewish population, then to Poles originating from the so-called Congress Kingdom area, and the ones considered inimical towards the German authorities. This latter group encompassed the entire educated class and the members of the patriotically oriented organisations. Simultaneously, in the region of Gdańsk Pomerania, a widely conceived extermination action was started, during which tens of thousands of persons were killed, in particular – in the locality of Piaśnica. Similar places of mass killings were located on the entire territory, incorporated into the Third Reich (like, e.g., in Szpęgawsk, Mnisek by Świecie, the "Death Valley" in Fordon, now a quarter of Bydgoszcz, or in Fort VII in Poznań).⁴

The objective of the German occupants was to eliminate the elite of the Polish society. Polish intelligentsia were treated as the primary enemy and their complete physical extermination was planned⁵. In the framework of the undertakings of Wehrmacht and the Security Police, during the so-called "Tannenberg" action, lasting until 25 October 1939, on the area of Greater Poland (Wielkopolska) several thousand persons were murdered⁶ (Pietrowicz, 2009, p. 49). Within the general plan of extermination of Polish intelligentsia the most brutal repressions were directed against the Polish clergy. The Nazis saw in the Catholic Church the main

⁴ In Fort VII in Poznań numerous intellectuals from Poznań, an important academic centre, were murdered, including outstanding geographer Stanisław Pawłowski, rector of the University of Poznań.

⁵ Yet before the war, in July 1939, upon the orders from Heydrich, the counterintelligence of the security service of SS (*Sicherheitsdienst*) prepared the proscription list of Poles, inimically oriented towards the Third Reich (*Sonderfahndungsbuch Polen*). This list contained as many as 61,000 names. It became the basis for the preparation of the realisation in May, July and November 1940 of the so-called Action AB (*Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion*). This was the acronym of the action aimed against the Polish leader elite and the intelligentsia. In the course of this action 52,000 persons were shot, listed by name as political activists, priests and scholars, who could, potentially, constitute a threat to the interest of the Third Reich (Łuczak, 1989, p. 25). Besides, tens of thousands of Poles were sent to concentration camps.

⁶ The most spectacular public executions took place on September 20th–23rd, 1939. Then, in 14 localities of Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), 230 Poles were shot according to the specially prepared lists of names. Terror intensified yet when full authority in the Land of Warta river was taken over from the military by the *gauleiter* (district leader) Arthur Greiser, who was the superior of the NSDAP party organisation. He intended to establish on the territory of Greater Poland a model German district, the so-called *Mustergau*. This priority task was to be accomplished through deportations and Germanising of population (Pietrowicz, 2009, p. 49).

force, withstanding the Germanising of the occupied Polish territories. Only in the Gdańsk and Chełmno diocese of 670 priests as many as 450 were killed.⁷

At the beginning of November 1939 the decision of relocation of the Polish and Jewish population was taken. Police authorities and security forces were entrusted with fulfilment of this task. According to the orders from Himmler the duty went to the Main Security Office of the Reich, managed by *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich. *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Adolf Eichmann was made responsible for the deportation actions. It was exactly then that this specialist in large-scale actions against humanity, later on condemned to death in Israel, started his criminal career. The extermination actions and the deportations were to be carried out by the police and the SS detachments, and not by the civilian administration. Consequently, they were implemented in a brutal and ruthless manner. Special field chapters, supposed to carry out the respective activities, were established, and in April 1940 the Relocation Centre was created in Poznań (*Umwandererzentralstelle – UWZ*), which was responsible for the effective and efficient resettlement of the Polish population to the General Governorship and to other regions of the Reich (Rutowska, 2009a, p. 14).

In order to unify the criteria for relocation of individual persons or families, special instructions were elaborated in April and June 1940. Decision was made that persons of Polish nationality, having German-sounding names and being Protestant, cannot be excluded from evacuation, similarly as Poles, who served in the World War I in the Prussian army. On the other hand, according to these instructions, the persons who ought not be relocated, included:

- those, who applied for being enlisted as Germans (*Deutsche Volksliste*),
- members of the German Catholic and Evangelical religious communities,
- persons, who declared German or Polish and German as their mother tongue during the census, carried out in December 1939,
- persons with relatives of the first and second degree in the Reich,
- all those, who had been accounted for in the “secret ethnic census”, carried out by the German associations and organisations in the years 1934–1937,
- spouses in the mixed German-Polish marriages,
- citizens of the third countries,
- members of various ethnic or national groups, such as Ukrainians, Cassubians, Masurians, Silesians (Rutowska, 2003, p. 69).

The resettled Poles, even in extraordinary situations, had no opportunities of appealing. The principle was kept to that every one, who was put on the deportation list, had to be deported, without exceptions. In practice, very few exceptions actually occurred, mainly due to interventions of industrial enterprises. The deportation applied, along with the owner of a house or a flat, to all the members of the closest family⁸ (Rutowska, 2003, p. 72).

⁷ The terrible fate of the Polish Catholic clergy during the World War II is the subject of the documentary report by Galiński (2003).

⁸ The Nazi administration used, when carrying out these actions, two main notions: *Aussiedlung*, meaning resettlement, and *Verdrängung*, meaning forced relocation, and in the district of Gdańsk-West Prussia, also *interne Umsiedlung*, i.e. removal. In the case of resettlement of a family, people were deprived of their dwellings and transported to the General Governorship or put in

In order to realise the plans designed, the Nazi authorities prepared the program of relocations according to the so-called three short-term plans (*Nahplan*). In the first of them, with duration between December 1st and 17th, 1939, relocation of 80,000 persons from the areas incorporated to the Reich was envisaged, in the second, encompassing the entire year 1940 – more than 600,000 persons were to be relocated, and in the third, lasting until the end of 1941 – more than 800,000 persons. Altogether some 1.5 million Poles and Jews were to be resettled to the General Governorship in the period of two years. The first of these planned stages was fully executed. The subsequent two resettlement stages were executed only partly. The entire deportation program was presented in the source publication of W. Jastrzębski (1968). The scale of these relocations will be shown here on the basis of this publication.

In the framework of the first relocation stage 87,789 persons were deported from the so-called Land of Warta river (*Warthegau*). This group was dominated by Poles, but it included also Jews⁹. Transports were carried out by railroads in very harsh climatic conditions (sharp, frosty winter). A lot of people did not survive this deportation¹⁰. The trains with the deported people were directed to the General Governorship towards the districts of Warsaw and Cracow, where the deported were left at various rallying points, located in the completely unprepared facilities. This entailed, again, numerous deaths and illnesses. After the realisation of this stage of the action, a break ensued, which lasted until February 10th, 1940. On this day the second stage was started, the so-called “intermediary plan” (*Zwischenplan*), which lasted until March 3rd, 1940. During this short period 40 trains were expedited from the Land of Warta, with 40,120 deported persons. The most affected by this action was the Polish population living in the cities. The objective of this selective action was to deprive the Poles of the leading strata of the society, which could have, in the future, constitute the core of the anti-German activity. That is why high shares among the deported were taken by the educated and the landed gentry. The planned relocations encompassed at that time first of all the so-called Land of Warta, and only to a very limited degree Gdańsk Pomerania and Silesia. The deported persons were directed to the successively established transitory camps, to be then sent to the General Governorship. Later

the transitory camps. The resettled had no right to return to their previous places of residence. Removal, on the other hand, was not always associated with the relocation from a given locality, but could simply mean loss of dwelling. Illegal return from the General Governorship or from a labour camp and hiding in the region of former residence entailed death penalty (*Wysiedlenie...*, 1985, p. 25).

⁹ Repressions against Jews in the Land of Warta are presented in the article of Górczyńska-Przybyłowicz (2009).

¹⁰ A Polish author describes in the following manner the conditions, in which Poles, relocated from Greater Poland, were transported: “It took usually a couple of days to move people to the General Governorship, and the deported Poles were during this ‘trip’ always excessively squeezed, mostly in non-heated freight cars, much less frequently in passenger cars, without any warm food for several days. They were badly hit by the cold and hunger during a very harsh winter of 1939/1940, while those transported in the summer and early autumn of 1940 had to endure heat, thirst and lack of fresh air... All of these circumstances constituted the direct cause of the deaths that occurred during transportation, especially of the small children as well as of the older and sick persons” (Rutowska, 2003, p. 197).

on, in view of the refusal from the side of the authorities of the General Governorship of admitting further transports, the Poles put into these camps, remained there and were employed on place in German economy.

After another short break, ending on March 15th, 1940, the subsequent stage of relocations from the so-called Land of Warta was started. This stage lasted until January 20th, 1941, and encompassed 133,506 persons, of whom 2,399 persons, fulfilling the racial criteria of being fit for “Germanising”, were sent to the Reich, some 10 thousand were sent to work in German industry and agriculture, while remaining ones were sent directly to the General Governorship. At the same time mass deportations were being carried out from the areas of Upper Silesia and the northern counties of Masovia, incorporated into East Prussia. The deportations from the areas incorporated into the Silesian voivodship started on September 23rd, 1940, and they affected primarily the county of Żywiec, from where until December 14th, 1940, 18 transports were dispatched, carrying 17,413 persons. The deportations from the Regency of Ciechanów concerned mainly the county of Mława, from which 10,700 inhabitants were resettled between 10th and 20th November 1940 in eleven railway transports. The subsequent action took place between December 5th and 17th, 1940, and in its framework additional 10 transports were dispatched with 9,946 persons. Similar actions took place in the district of Gdańsk-West Prussia, from where between November 1940 and March 15th, 1941, 10,504 inhabitants were deported. The subsequent stage of relocations from the Land of Warta was started on January 21st, 1941. During two months, that is – until March 15th, 1941, the Nazi authorities managed to relocate in 19 transports 19,226 persons.

This was the last organised resettlement action. The authorities of the General Governorship decided not to accept any further transport since March 16th, 1941. They motivated this decision by the economic arguments and the perturbations that the transports were bringing about in the war economy, especially in the period of preparations to war with the Soviet Union.

The general statistical summary of the resettlement of the Polish – and partly Jewish – population from the areas incorporated into the Reich to the territory of the General Governorship was elaborated by W. Jastrzębski (1968, p. 86). The author mentioned quotes in his work the contents of the report submitted to Hitler by the Staff Unit of the Reich’s Commissioner, entrusted with the strengthening of the German element. Thus, according to this document, between September 1939 and the end of the resettlement action 365,000 persons were deported. Yet, Jastrzębski is of the opinion that the relocations affected a much higher number of inhabitants, since the reports of the Resettlement Centre in Lodz suggest that from the Land of Warta alone 280,641 persons were deported to the General Governorship. It can be concluded from the German documents that 91,533 persons were deported from the district of Gdańsk-West Prussia, 22,000 from Upper Silesia, and 20,646 from the Regency of Ciechanów. Hence, altogether 414,820 persons were removed from their places of residence in the forced action of resettlement from the areas incorporated into the Reich to the General Governorship, the ones deported in an unplanned manner put aside. While presenting these statistical data, W. Jastrzębski proposes that the deportations affected

in reality altogether 450,000 inhabitants. One should yet add that in the consequence of terror, numerous Poles, fleeing persecutions, left the territories annexed into the Reich. This was taking place under the circumstances of the simultaneously conducted extermination action oriented against Jews and the Polish intelligentsia.

During the following years, 1941–1944, further actions of extermination of Jews and deportation of Poles from the areas included in the Reich were taking place. They were, however, increasingly chaotic and had a smaller scale. The more and more dramatic socio-economic situation, caused by the military defeats and difficulties in transport, made impossible undertaking of new, broader resettlement actions. And still, yet until the end of 1944 the German authorities were attempting to change the ethnic situation within the former western territories of Poland. According to Cz. Łuczak (1979, p. 136) in the years 1939–1944 between 918,000 and 928,000 persons were deported or evicted from the areas incorporated in the Reich. Of these – 630,000 from the Land of Warta river, 81,000 from Silesia, 124,000 from Pomerania, 25,000 from the Białystok district, 28,000 from the Regency of Ciechanów, and between 30,000 and 40,000 in the framework of the so-called “irregular” deportations, taking place mainly in Pomerania (see Fig. III.3).

The relocation and eviction actions were conducted with different intensities, both in temporal and in territorial aspect. Yet, they encompassed the entire territory incorporated into the Third Reich. In the valuable publication of M. Rutowska (2003), side by side with the complete statistical analysis, subject once again by Rutowska to thorough verification, information is provided on the numbers of persons relocated from the Land of Warta during the entire period of World War II (1939–1945). At the level of counties the biggest numbers of Polish population were relocated from the counties of: Wieluń (Welungen) – 41,362, Łask (Lask) – 43,465, city and county of Poznań (Posen) – 41,362, Sieradz (Schieratz) – 34,643, Łęczyca (Leutschütz) – 34,271, city of Lodz (Łódź, Litzmannstadt) – 33,369, Kalisz (Kalisch) – 30,884, Konin (Konin) – 23,548, Kutno (Kutno) – 22,566, Turek (Turek) – 22,018, Gostyń (Gostingen) – 21,185 and Krotoszyn (Krotoschin) – 20,667. In the remaining counties the numbers of the resettled persons ranged from a couple to more than dozen thousand.

According to the author already quoted, on the basis of German sources it can be estimated that between 1939 and 1945 from the Land of Warta alone approximately 625,000 persons were relocated, of whom 280,000, in the framework of the planned resettlement actions, were transported to General Governorship. The purely statistical information on the numbers of victims of relocations does not convey the image of the methods and organisation of these drastic undertakings. The resettlement actions would start with strong police detachments surrounding individual localities, and in towns – quarters or streets. Those subject to relocation were removed from their homes and dwellings in the late evening or early morning hours. The aim was to take those people by surprise and not allow them to be prepared for evacuation. The dwelling had to be abandoned in 30 minutes. Only hand-held luggage could be taken. Then, all the deported were searched and more valuable objects were confiscated. The deported were

deprived of all rights. They were directed to the transitory camps or to the railway stations, where they waited to be transported.

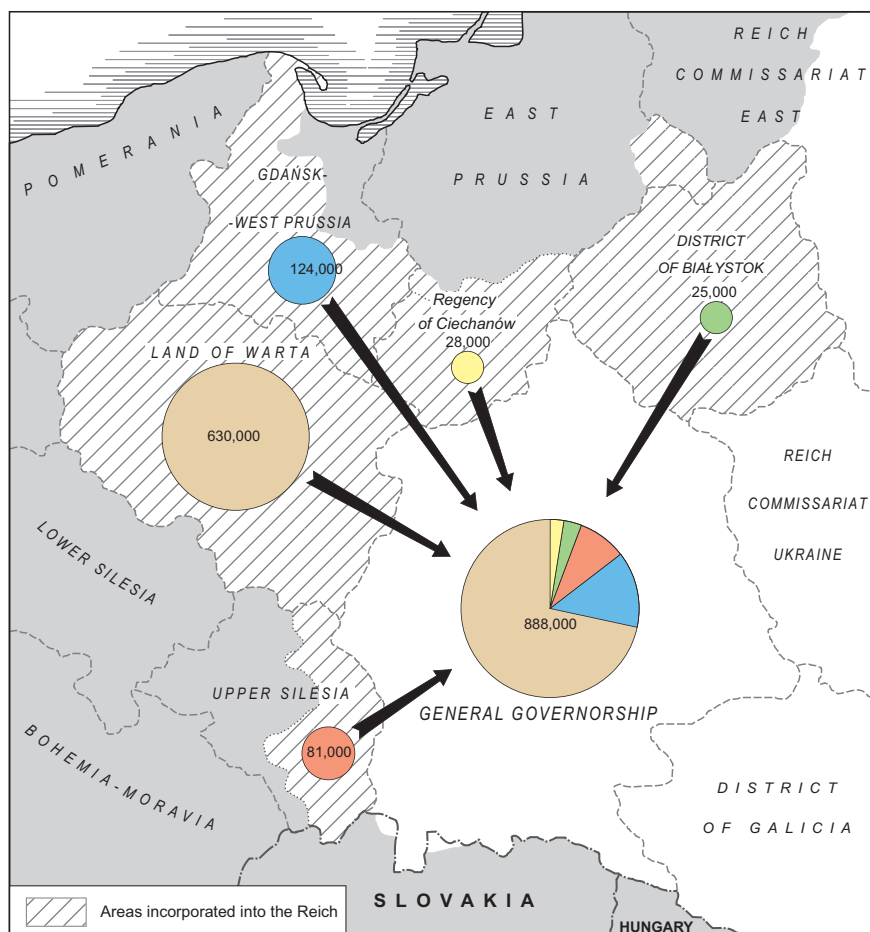


Fig. III.3. Deportations of Polish population to General Governorship from the areas incorporated in the Third Reich in the period 1939–1944
Source: own elaboration.

The Nazi authorities established on the territory of occupied Poland some 5,000 camps. They were of various characters. The first ones were the so-called transitory camps of the security police. At more or less the same time the so-called transitory resettlement camps, serving the purpose of relocation of the Polish population. Approximately 1.2 million Poles passed through these camps. An entirely different form was constituted by the so-called concentration camps, meant for the political prisoners, victims of the pacification actions and hostages. They, in turn, differed from the death camps, whose purpose was to possibly immediately exterminate people (Wardzyńska, 2009, pp. 101–113).

In late autumn of 1939 first camps were established on the territories, incorporated into the Reich, for the Polish population, meant for the resettlement. On the area of the Land of Warta these camps were organised in Poznan, Cerekwica (county of Jarocin), Dobrzyca (county of Krotoszyn), Gniezno, Kowanówek and Bąblin (county of Oborniki), Młyniewo (county of Nowy Tomyśl), and Skalmierzyce (county of Ostrów Wielkopolski). Extremely harsh conditions existed in these camps. Even most primitive sanitary facilities were lacking. No food was provided. From these camps the resettled were moved to the railway side-tracks, from where, in packed cars, they were transported to General Governorship.¹¹ Mention was already made of the very hard conditions of the transport, which, despite a relatively short distance, lasted for dozens of hours. All this was taking place before the eyes of the Polish population, both in the General Governorship and those that still remained on the territories included formally in Germany. They observed the pains of their fellow countrymen and remembered them very well indeed. After just few years, when the Third Reich collapsed, planned and spontaneous resettlement of the German population started. The roles changed. German scholars, who analyse the relocations, taking place after the war, lost by the Third Reich, are ill disposed to the recognition of the fact that the forced movements of the population on those territories were started in 1939 in the drastic manner by the German Nazi authorities. Definite cause-and-effect mechanism was put to work, which later on went out of any control. Deportations and evictions became a normal procedure, implemented by the victors with respect to the defeated.

The actions of forced resettlement and deportation, conducted on the territories incorporated into the Third Reich, brought later on highly disadvantageous consequences for the German population. They namely made a precedent and justified the later relocations of the German population. It is known that they were not the reason for the decisions taken in Potsdam on the resettlement of the German population from Poland. Yet, they were the starting point of a certain process, which aimed at creation of ethnically "pure" areas through deportation of the native population and settling of the newcomers, representing the nationality of the victorious country, on their place.

III.3. Deportations of population from the Polish lands incorporated to the Soviet Union

The invasion of the Soviet army on the eastern territories of the 2nd Commonwealth and the incorporation of these territories in the Belarusian SSR, Ukrainian SSR and partly Lithuania (the region of Vilna) brought highly signif-

¹¹ The memoirs of Poles, resettled by the German Nazi occupants from the Polish territories, incorporated into the Reich, were collected and published. They demonstrate the barbarian methods used with respect to civilian population (*Wysiedlenie...*, 1985).

icant consequences for the population inhabiting these areas. The inhabitants, irrespective of their nationality, were deprived of the Polish citizenship and were subject to the Soviet legal system. In terms of practical realisation of the respective decree, the action of the so-called “*passportising*” was declared (in pre-war Poland there was no internal passport nor ID card), associated with the granting of the Soviet citizenship. The population inhabiting the occupied territories was classified into numerous categories, with application of various criteria referring to nationality, religion, wealth, social status, profession, as well as potential attitude towards the new authorities. This was to constitute the basis for the conduct of an appropriate repression policy with respect to various social groups. In the very first phase the persecutions affected the owning classes, the former Polish administrative apparatus, police, military and clergy. Thereafter the repression encompassed the entire Polish population, as well as the persons of other nationalities, associated with the groups or societies that were considered to be inimical with respect to the “new reality”. Arrests started, followed by the widely conceived actions of population relocation. The occupied territory was treated as a border zone, within which the presence of politically uncertain persons, not guaranteeing full loyalty with respect to the Soviet authority, should not be tolerated.

The deportations were by no means haphazard. On the basis of the secret order of the NKVD no. 0054 of November 28th, 1940, which was later found, the following categories of persons were subject to arrest and then deportation:

- members of the anti-Soviet leftist parties,
- members of the anti-Soviet nationalist parties,
- military police and prison guards,
- former officers of the tsarist army (“White Guard” officers),
- officers of the Polish army,
- freewill White Guard soldiers,
- persons rejected from the communist party or the communist youth organisation Komsomol,
- political emigrants and “uncertain” elements,
- all foreigners and persons having foreign connections,
- persons maintaining contacts with abroad, like philatelists, esperantists, etc.,
- higher officers of the state,
- employees of the Red Cross,
- refugees from Poland,
- clergy,
- former landowners, industrialists, merchants.

Mass arrests and deportations of population far away into the territory of the Soviet Union commenced on the basis of this secret order. The respective problems were broadly discussed in the Polish literature in exile. The numerous published reports and studies, though, were based on quite incidental and subjective documentation, founded on the accounts from individuals. That is why the estimates concerning the number of the deported were provided in a little precise and highly exaggerated manner. It was only after it became possible to consult the Soviet archives, namely after 1990, that the complete and reliable informa-

tion was obtained concerning the scale of some of the migration movements, having occurred between October 1939 and 22 June 1941. This issue was presented in the most precise manner in the Polish literature of the subject by S. Ciesielski et al. (1993, 2004)¹². We will be quoting after them the data concerning the scale of deportations that affected Polish population inhabiting the areas between the Soviet-Nazi demarcation line, established on September 28th in Moscow, and the eastern border of the 2nd Commonwealth.

The first category of population, targeted for deportation, were the so-called *settlers*. This was the population group, who flowed into the eastern lands of Poland after the Polish-Bolshevik war. They were mainly the Polish military, who were granted farms within the eastern lands of Poland ("Kresy", the Borderlands) as a reward for their services during the war. This group was politically and economically privileged by the authorities of the pre-war Poland. That is why they were surrounded by the animosity from the side of the local Belarussian and Ukrainian population. The decision of the deportation of the "settlers" was taken by the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR on 29 December 1939. Mass deportations started in the night of 9 to 10 February 1940. This action encompassed around 150,000 people. Of the deported "settlers" 142,000 reached the destination locations. Transportation of the deported lasted for about a month and took place during sharp frosts. This entailed a lot of deaths among the elderly and little children¹³. According to the data as of June 1941 the population of the deported was dominated by Poles (109,233 persons, i.e. 81.7% of the total). There were also Ukrainians (11,720 persons, i.e. 8.8%) and Belarussians (10,802 persons, i.e. 8.1%) in this population. The deported originated in 1/3 from the areas incorporated to the Belarussian SSR and in 2/3 from the areas of south-eastern Poland, incorporated in the Ukrainian SSR. According to the documents kept in the Archives of the Republic of Belarus, 51,310 persons, inhabiting 9,584 farms, were marked for deportations. Ultimately, 50,732 persons, inhabiting 9,504 farms, were deported (Giżejewska, 1997, p. 92). All the

¹² Very valuable, and also objective report on the forced relocations of the population, carried out by the Soviet authorities on the territory of the USSR and on the areas controlled by the NKVD, is constituted by the book written by the Russian geographer P. Polyan (2001). A lot of facts are reported there, along with an ample bibliography of the Russian publications, devoted to the deportations and resettlements.

¹³ Transportation of the deported deep into the territory of the USSR was done primarily by railways, and it was only within Siberia that ships would transport those people to the camps, situated far North. In view of a small number of railway prison-cars, cargo cars were made use of. In each of them several levels of wooden platforms were installed, serving as sleeping boards, and a tin tube was inserted in the floor, playing the role of the toilet. In winter, small iron ovens were added with a very limited amount of fuel. Up to 50 deported were transported in one car. In summer they suffered from heat and lack of air, in winter – from biting cold. The usual daily ration of food consisted of 400 g of bread and half a litre of water for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Pieces of salted fish were served very rarely. Transportation would take between a fortnight and several weeks. The deported, deprived of medical care, would get sick and die, also of hunger, thirst and cold. At the moment of unloading at the point of destination they were extremely exhausted and forceless. Such tragic events would also take place like in February 1940, when all of the deported Poles in a train (estimated 1,050 persons), and a part of the Soviet guards froze to death. This train transport was stuck then in the snow-drifts on the line Kotlas–Vorkuta and was dug out only several days later (Cherubin, 1989, pp. 64–65).

deported had a special status of resettled persons and were put, under the supervision of the NKVD, in 317 specially established camps. The hard work conditions and the starvation food rations brought about high mortality in the camps themselves. Altogether, this group of the deported was composed of the following numbers of persons:

in November 1940	– 137,351 persons (28,569 families)
on January 1st, 1941	– 137,132 persons (28,612 families)
on April 1st, 1941	– 134,491 persons
in September 1941	– 132,463 persons.

The deported were transported to the East and dispersed over vast territories of the Soviet Union. The biggest number was sent to the Arkhangelsk district and to Krasnoyarsk Land.

On the basis of the findings of a Russian scholar (Zemskov, 1990, 1994), who was able of perusing the documentation of the NKVD, the already mentioned historians from Wrocław (Ciesielski et al., 1993, 2004) have compiled the data on the destinations of deportations of the Polish citizens, classified in the category of the so-called “settlers”. On April 1st, 1941, there were by 2,641 less of them than on January 1st, 1941. It can be supposed that this was the effect of losses borne during the three months of winter. They were dispersed on the territory of the Russian Federal SSR, and partly the Kazakh SSR. Their largest group was put in the labour camps in the far North of the European part of the USSR and in Siberia (see Table III.2).

The subsequent deportation took place on 12th and 13th April 1940. It was applied mainly to the families of the arrested or deported persons or those known for their anti-Soviet views. The deportation of 22–25 thousand families was envisaged. Ultimately, 60,667 persons were deported, mainly of Polish nationality. They originated from the Ukrainian areas-to-be – 33,890 persons, and from the Belarussian ones – 26,777 persons. All of them were transported to the Kazakh SSR, where they were put in the following districts: Northern Kazakh – 20,046 persons, Pavlodar – 11,440 persons, Kustanai – 8,103 persons, Semipalatinsk – 7,638 persons, Aktyubinsk – 6,816 persons, and Akmola – 6,308 persons. The status of the deported was different from the one of the previously relocated “settlers”. They were not put into camps, but were dispersed among the Kazakhstan kolkhozes (“co-operative farms”) and sovkhozes (“state farms”). They found themselves there in very harsh food supply conditions.

At the occasion of commenting upon the demographic effects of the German and Soviet aggression against Poland it was already mentioned that in the second half of September 1939, fearing the approaching German army, many inhabitants of the central and western parts of Poland moved to the eastern “Kresy” of Poland, which, after having been invaded by the Red Army, was incorporated into the western Soviet republics. Among these refugees the Jewish population dominated, but many Poles, as well, moved to the areas to the East of the demarcation line. According to the Soviet estimates, after deduction of the Polish POWs, the number of civil refugees was at 300,000. A part of them returned, at the end of 1939 and in the beginning of 1940, to the areas occupied by the Germans (around 66,000). These refugees constituted a significant trouble for the Soviet

Table III.2. The numbers and the distribution of the deported “settlers” in the USSR as of April 1st, 1941

Location of deportation	Numbers of the deported	
	number	% share
Kazakh SSR	5,307	3.95
Bashkir SSR	275	0.20
Komi Autonomous SSR	9,954	7.40
Altay Land	5,926	4.41
Krasnoyarsk Land	13,339	9.92
Districts of the Russian FSSR		
Arkhangelsk	38,662	28.72
Chelyabinsk	1,653	1.23
Chkalov	625	0.47
Gorky	1,725	1.28
Irkutsk	593	0.44
Ivanovo	11,513	8.56
Yaroslavl	503	0.37
Kirov	2,204	1.64
Molotov	9,040	6.72
Novosibirsk	3,191	2.37
Omsk	6,946	5.17
Sverdlovsk	13,562	10.08
Vologda	9,433	7.01
Unzhlag NKVD ¹	80	0.06
Totals	134,491	100.00

¹ The Unzhlag camp complex encompassed labour camps located in the area of Unzha river (left tributary of Volga) in the district of Gorky.

Source: Ciesielski et al. (1993, p. 36).

authorities, for they were usually deprived of the means for living and did not have any permanent residences. On the other hand, the authorities of the NKVD did not trust them in political terms. That is why the Council of the People’s Commissars of the USSR took the decision on March 2nd, 1940, of the deportation of the refugees (*byezhentsy*, literally: escapees). The deportation action was carried out in the night of 29th to 30th of June 1940. According to the data of NKVD altogether 24,722 families were deported, consisting of 77,710 persons. This group of the deported was dominated by Jews – 64,533 persons (84.6% of the total), but there were also 8,357 Poles and 1,728 Ukrainians. Similarly as in the case of the preceding deportations, this group was primarily composed of the persons, who stayed in south-eastern Poland, and especially in Lwów (L’viv). The same action encompassed, as well, the areas incorporated in the Belarusian SSR, from where 7,224 families were deported, consisting of 22,873 persons. Conform to other

sources, 23,629 persons were deported, of whom from the district of Baranowicze – 2,494 persons, from the district of Białystok – 13,250, from the district of Brest’ – 5,856, from the district of Wilejka – 313, from the district of Pińsk – 964, etc. (Giżejewska, 1997, p. 94).

The majority of the deported in these last actions came from towns. There was a high share of the educated people among them. It can be assumed that they were primarily Jews, aware of the threat that the German Nazism constituted for them. Some of them were the supporters of the Communist Party of Poland and willingly collaborated with the new authorities. This, however, had not an essential influence on the attitude of the NKVD to them, insofar as all refugees from the West were treated as a politically uncertain element. The group of “refugees” was transported to 14 districts, lands and republics in the East and North of the USSR and they were distributed among 269 different localities (Ciesielski et al., 1993, p. 41).

They were placed in the labour camps dispersed across the vast territories of the USSR. They worked mainly in felling in the forests, in construction of railway lines, and in the extension of the successive camps, under preparation for the subsequent waves of the deported. The biggest number of the “refugees” were transported to the districts of Novosibirsk, Sverdlovsk and Arkhangelsk (see Table III.3).

Table III.3. The numbers and the distribution of the deported “refugees” in the USSR as of April 1st, 1941

Location of deportation	Numbers of the deported	
	numbers	% shares
Yakut SSR	3,510	4.62
Komi Autonomous SSR	8,818	11.59
Mari Autonomous SSR	5,693	7.48
Altay Land	3,960	5.21
Krasnoyarsk Land	1,449	1.90
Districts of the Russian FSSR		
Arkhangelsk	12,322	16.20
Chelyabinsk	519	0.68
Gorky	879	1.16
Irkutsk	2,321	3.05
Molotov	1,504	1.98
Novosibirsk	16,437	21.61
Omsk	1,592	2.09
Sverdlovsk	13,140	17.27
Vologda	3,924	5.16
Totals	76,068	100.00

Source: Ciesielski et al. (2004), p. 232.

The next large deportation took place in May and June 1941. Decision on this action was taken by the authorities in Moscow on May 14th, 1941, and it was meant to relocate people from the border areas of the USSR. During two months preceding the German-Soviet conflict altogether 85,716 persons were deported, of whom from the so-called western Ukraine – 9,595 persons, from western Belarus – 27,887 persons, and from Lithuania, incorporated into the Soviet Union as well – 12,682 persons. The present author estimates that around 38,000 of the deported originated from the eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth. This group was composed of the representatives of all the ethnic groups present on the respective territories. The destinations were: the Novosibirsk district (19,362 persons), the Land of Altay (17,446), the Land of Krasnoyarsk (16,784), as well as Kazakhstan (15,413). This deportation action was only interrupted by the Nazi invasion against the Soviet Union.

The documentation of the NKVD suggests that during a relatively short time approximately 330,000 Polish citizens were relocated from the occupied Polish territories to northern Russia, Siberia and Kazakhstan (Fig. III.4). The population of the deported was dominated by Poles, of whom there were around 210,000 (63.6% of the total). The second group was constituted by Jews – more than 70,000 (21.2%), who were followed by Ukrainians – 25,000 (7.6%) and Belarusians – 20,000 (6.0%). There were also, much less numerous, Lithuanians, Germans and Russians among the deported¹⁴.

The here mentioned deportations encompass only a part of the forced movements. At the same time mass arrests were taking place. According to the data from NKVD, as of March 5th, 1940, there were 18,662 persons in the prisons of the western districts of the Ukrainian SSR and the Belarusian SSR, of whom 10,685 were Poles. On the very same day the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued the decision of killing 7,305 of those persons. Besides, numerous arrested persons were sent individually, or in groups, to prisons located deep in the territory of the USSR.

Immediately after the German aggression against the Soviet Union the extermination of prisoners and their evacuation to the East, organised by NKVD, started. In the course of marches over hundreds of miles mass killings of prisoners would occur. The transports of the evacuated would reach their destination with only few of them surviving (Cherubin, 1989, p. 70).

As we speak of the population movements, which took place on the eastern territories, we cannot neglect numerous movements of quite another political background. Thus, the Soviet authorities started the propaganda among the young, encouraging them to leave for work in industrial plants located in east-

¹⁴ Polish citizens were transported to the labour camps, situated in the northern and eastern parts of the Soviet Union, from Karelia in the West to Magadan in the East. These were not individual camps, but camp complexes. Among the most known was the so-called Bamlag complex, located along the planned Baikal-Amur railway line (the so-called BAM), then Sevostlag in the area of Magadan, Belbaltlag, along the White Sea Canal, Volgolag in the vicinity of Uglich and Rybinsk, or Dallag to the North of Vladivostok. The functioning of and the living conditions in the Soviet camps were commonly known in Poland, due to the reports from people, who had been inmates in them. After the book by A. Solzhenitsyn (*The Gulag Archipelago*) had been published, the reality of the Soviet camps started to be known also in the West.

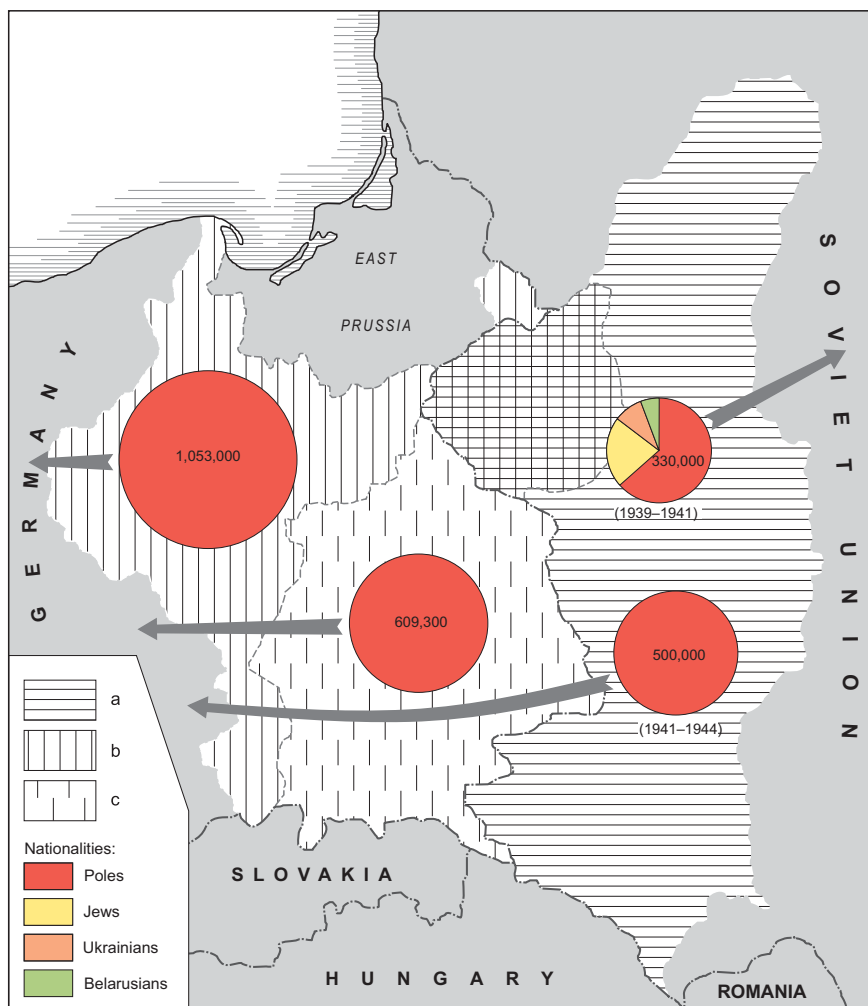


Fig. III.4. Deportations of Polish citizens into far areas of the Soviet Union in the years 1939–1941 and transportation of Polish labour force to work in the German Reich in the period 1939–1944;
 a – territory occupied by the USSR in the years 1939–1941,
 b – territory incorporated into the German Reich in the years 1939–1945,
 c – General Governorship.
 Source: own elaboration.

ern Ukraine and central Russia. These freewill or forced translocations encompassed dozens of thousands of persons. At the same time the mobilisation to the Red Army was announced. Several age groups of young men were enlisted. The recruits were directed to the garrisons located far away in the USSR.

The numbers of the deported and of the prisoners of war, shot in Katyń, Kharkov and Tver, have been precisely calculated. A similarly precise determination of the numbers of other categories of the persecuted persons is quite difficult. Until now there are questions that have not been fully explained and the researchers gradually dig out the documents, indicating the consecutive crimes, perpetrated by the Soviet system against Polish citizens. According to the data available as of the time of this writing, the number of persons, subject in the years 1939–1941 to repressions ending with the death of the victims, their deportation or evacuation, amounts to 475,387 in total (see Table III.4).

Table III.4. Numbers of Polish citizens subject to repressions in the USSR in the years 1939–1941

Nature of repression	Number of victims
Prisoners of war and the interned	45,387
1. Prisoners of war shot in Katyń, Kharkov and Tver, 1940	14,587
2. Interned prisoners of war, in captivity until August 1941	26,200
3. Prisoners of war having died in the years 1939–1941 and lost during evacuation	2,300
4. Released, arrested in the camps and handed over to the Germans (1940–1941)	2,300
Arrested within the Eastern Borderlands ("Kresy")	110,000
1. On the territory of the so-called western Ukraine	65,000
2. On the territory of the so-called western Belarus	43,000
3. On the territory of Lithuania	2,000
Deported	320,000
1. On February 10th, 1940	140,000
2. On April 13th, 1940	61,000
3. In June 1940	79,000
4. In June 1941	40,000
Total	475,387

Source: Gawryszewski (2005, p. 496).

Analogous studies, concerning the scale of extermination and resettlements, were conducted by the Russian scholar Alexander Gurjanov (1994, 2008), who dealt with the repressive aspect of the Soviet system with respect to the Polish population. According to his calculations, the number of Polish citizens, subject to repressions between September 1939 and June 1941 was between 462,000 and 490,000, of whom 33,100 persons were killed, and at least 25,300 persons died due to harsh living conditions. The irrevocable demographic losses, meaning the number of the dead due to repressions, were therefore estimated as equal 58,400 persons (see Table III.5).

The statistical differences between various analyses of different authors are rather small and demonstrate that the materials considered, originating from the archives of the NKVD, can be treated as a reliable source of information. It can be, therefore, assumed that the total scope of population movements, caused by political reasons, was at around 600,000 persons. Of these, direct repressions

affected half a million people, with 330,000 deported deep into the USSR, and close to 60,000 victims of physical extermination.

Table III.5. Soviet repressions on the eastern lands of Poland in the years 1939–1941

Categories of persons persecuted	Totals	in that: the numbers of the dead	
		killed	dead due to other causes
Prisoners of war (as of December 1st, 1939) and the interned from Lithuania and Latvia	45,000	14,600	2,300
Arrested	108,000–112,000	18,500	7,100
Deported, including:			
– special category of the resettled (the “settlers”)	141,000		12,200
– families of the persecuted persons	61,000	–	1,500?
– special category of the resettled (the “refugees”)	76,000–79,000	–	2,200
– deported / resettled upon administrative decisions	31,000–52,000	–	?
Totals	462,000–490,000	33,100	25,300?

Source: Zwolski (2008, p. 23).

Transports with the deported people were directed to Siberia or to the northern areas of the European part of Russia. The distances between the starting points and the destinations of these murderous journeys would amount often to thousands of kilometres. This was the difference with the German resettlements, which were usually done over not very big distances. The Soviet transports lasted for a fortnight. People stayed in crowded cars. Children and the elderly would very often die during travelling¹⁵. After having reached the destination locations, the emaciated people were put in the labour camps or in the kolkhozes (the so-called “cooperative farms”) among the local population. Living and sanitary conditions were dramatic. Sickesses, undernourishment and wasting labour strongly affected the level of mortality. Until the middle of 1941 (hence – during 16 months), conform to the incomplete data, out of close to 140,000 of the deported settlers, 10,557 died (Ciesielski et al., 2004, p. 237).

Simultaneously, population from the East started to flow into the areas incorporated into the Soviet Union. These were mainly the functionaries of the administrative and party apparatus. They took all the more pronounced posts. New garrisons came to stay in the military facilities. They became the places of residence of the Soviet officer corps. According to various estimates some 200,000 to 300,000 Soviet citizens came to the eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth with

¹⁵ The sanitary and nutritional conditions in the cargo cars, in which the deported were brought to the labour camps in Far East, were inhuman. Many people have not reached the destination places. According to the information from Beria, transmitted to Stalin on May 1st, 1944, during the very transportation 11,516 Polish citizens died (Taras, 2008, p. 721).

the aim of rapid integration and pacification of the eastern territories of Poland, conquered due the military aggression.

In view of the lack of appropriate statistical data it is difficult to evaluate the overall volume of the migration movements, which took place between October 1939 and June 1941 on the Polish lands situated to the East of the Soviet-Nazi demarcation line. With Polish POWs not accounted for the movements of the civilian population alone encompassed at least 600,000 people. Most of these movements had a forced character and took place in drastic sanitary and food supply conditions. People were brutally forced to leave their native land and to set on a far off wandering, from which only very few returned to their previous places of residence.

Living conditions of the deported Poles, brought to the labour camps and the kolkhozes in Siberia and Kazakhstan, were exceptionally harsh. Numerous Polish citizens, among whom Poles were a vast majority, but there were a lot of Jews as well, died of hunger, frost and killing work. Mortality was especially high in the camps located around Vorkuta, Arkhangelsk or Norilsk. Likewise, few deportees returned from the camps situated in the vicinity of Magadan. They would usually die during the first months of their stay there and work in gold mines¹⁶.

The event, which constituted the turning point and changed the conditions of living and the legal status, was re-establishment of the Polish-Soviet official relations. This happened as a result of agreement signed between the two states on July 30th, 1941 in London (the so-called Sikorski-Mayski¹⁷ agreement). The agreement was the basis for the proclamation of amnesty for the Polish citizens by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 12th, 1941. Soviet authorities informed then, upon a demand from the Polish side, that there were in the USSR 387,932 persons, who had been Polish citizens until September 1939, kept in various forms of captivity – 71,481 in camps and prisons, 291,137 in “special-purpose settlements” (“*spetsposelki*”), and 25,314 in POW camps. Until the end of September 1941, 265,248 Polish citizens were liberated from camps or deportations.

These data are reliable, as they find confirmation in other official documents of the NKVD. Thus, in particular, the report prepared by L. Beria for Stalin of August 1st, 1941, mentions the number of 391,575 deported Polish citizens. A similar number of the deported is also indicated in the document, prepared for Stalin by Beria three years later (on May 1st, 1944), namely 389,382. According to the latter document 129,962 Polish citizens were put in prisons and labour

¹⁶ An outstanding Belarusian historian, author of a monumental and objective work, devoted to the Polish-Russian relations, gives the following moral assessment of the deportations, carried out by the Soviet authorities: “Killings and deportations of Polish citizens were the crimes of the Stalinist regime, which ought to be qualified as genocide against the Polish nation, and, more generally, against humanity, implemented with exceptional cruelty. Thus, for instance, of 10 thousand Polish citizens, transported to the camps in Kolyma, 171 persons survived, while of 3 thousand sent to Chukotka nobody returned” (Taras, 2008, p. 732).

¹⁷ General Władysław Sikorski, the Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile. Ivan Mayski – Soviet ambassador in London.

camps, 234,106 persons were settled in “special-purpose settlements”, while 25,314 of military personnel were put in the POW camps (Ciesielski et al., 2003, p. 248).

After the proclamation of “amnesty”, which was an exceptional event in the history of the Soviet Union, some 250,000 of the former deportees started to move towards the southern areas of the USSR, featuring warmer climate (Uzbek SSR, Kyrgyz SSR and Kazakh SSR), where those people hoped to find better living conditions. After respective formal agreements between Stalin and Sikorski, Polish army started to get established under the command of General Władysław Anders in these areas. The army reached the strength of 70,000 soldiers. In 1942 the army, along with the accompanying civilian refugees (41,100 persons) left the territory of the USSR and over the Caspian Sea went to Persia. Women and children would then be sent from there to Australia, New Zealand and the British colonies in Africa. The regular Polish army, on the other hand, through the Middle East, with a longer stay in Palestine, reached the Italian front of the war, where, under the name of II Polish Corps took part on the Allied side in the fighting on the line from Monte Cassino to Bologna and Ancona.

After these renewed diplomatic relations between Poland and the Soviet Union were broken, as the result of disclosure of the Katyń crime, the situation of the Polish population, having remained in the USSR, worsened a lot. Soviet authorities started the “passportisation” action, meaning forced granting of the Soviet citizenship, with all the formal consequences of it. This citizenship was forced upon 165,208 persons, while 24,151 persons were considered to be Polish citizens. At the beginning of 1943 the authorities of NKVD estimated the number of former Polish citizens in the Soviet Union at 256,077 (Ciesielski et al., 2004, pp. 253–254). These were the deported persons, who were transported between September 1939 and June 1941 from eastern Poland, and did not succeed to get evacuated to Persia.

In the middle of 1943 the attitude of the Soviet administration towards Poles improved significantly again. This fact was due to the new political circumstances – namely Stalin started the preparations to the establishment of a new Polish centre of authority, opposed to the Polish government in exile. Upon the demand from the Union of Polish Patriots, the Soviet-run communist group, formed in the USSR, Soviet authorities allowed on April 5th, 1944, for the resettlement of 26,900 Poles from the sub-polar areas to the southern territories of the USSR. A similar decision was issued on July 11th, 1944, for the subsequent group of approximately 30,000 Poles. Yet another round of resettlements towards the South started in that very month (Ciesielski et al., 2004, pp. 256–257). These actions, similarly as the preceding ones, saved the lives of many a thousand Poles, since the conditions of existence in the camps far North were extremely harsh. In connection with formation of a new Polish army in 1943, under the command of General Zygmunt Berling, numerous young Poles were liberated from the labour camps.

III.4. Inflow of the German population into the occupied Polish areas

Similarly as there was an inflow of the Soviet citizens to the territory occupied by the Red Army, there was also an inflow of the citizens of the Third Reich – the officers of German nationality of the newly established administration – to the zone occupied by the Nazi forces. These two migration processes were, however, incomparable as to their scale and the demographic-political character. The primary objective of the policy pursued by Stalin was to Sovietise and homogenise ideologically the conquered areas. On the other hand, Hitler's plan envisaged full Germanising and change of the ethnic character of the western, and later on also central, Poland. The newcomers to the eastern areas of Poland were the Soviet party functionaries, whose task it was to introduce the communist system and to enslave the inhabitants. The deportations to the East affected the population inimical towards the "new reality". There were no plans of colonising these territories by the inflow of the new settlers. The Nazi authorities, from their side, planned to settle on the occupied areas the population of German language and culture. The deportation of a part of the Polish population from the areas incorporated into the Reich was meant to constitute one of the essential elements of the planned Germanising. Simultaneously, a large colonisation action was devised. The intention was to bring into the occupied territories, which were to become an integral part of the great German empire, the settlers from the German core areas. Besides, it was expected that the Germans living until then in the Baltic States, Ukraine, Russia, Romania or Yugoslavia would come in large numbers.

In the first phase of this planned action the ethnically Polish areas, incorporated in 1939 into the Reich were to lose their original ethnic character. The first program on this matter was presented by the minister for food and agriculture of the Reich, Walter Darré. He proposed to settle in Pomerania and in Greater Poland 64,000 German families. This program, though, was assessed by Hitler to be insufficient, since it did not envisage complete Germanisation of Pomerania, Silesia and Greater Poland. The subsequent plan of the German settlement action was designed in August 1939, and then modified after the defeat of Poland, in October 1939. It became the program for the German colonisation on the areas incorporated in the Reich. It was planned to completely Germanise these territories by bringing in there four to five million Germans. They were to reside in one of the three designed settlement belts: in the first one, named "the Bridge" (*die Brücke*), linking Wrocław (Breslau) with Działdowo over Kalisz, Konin and Włocławek, in the second one, called "the Dyke" (*der Damm*), stretching from Piła along Noteć river through Bydgoszcz and Grudziądz to Działdowo, and in the third one, named "the border of the armed peasants" (*die Grenze der Wehrbauern*) stretching from Wrocław through Łódź to the then East Prussia. It was expected that these lands would get Germanised if the number of the Germans settled there attained four million (Łuczak, 1993, p. 166).

Immediately after the Polish territories had been captured, German population started to flow into the areas under Nazi occupation. In the very first phase this was associated with the necessity of organising the administration of the conquered areas. In the subsequent stage an organised settling of the population of German extraction started. It is estimated that during the war some 1.3 million persons of German nationality moved into the occupied territories. This estimate does not include the Germans serving in the military formations. Before the war, on Polish areas incorporated into the Reich some 600,000 Germans lived, while on the area to become the General Governorship and in the eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth – altogether around 100,000 Germans. Hence, within the boundaries of Poland as of 31 August 1939 the number of German population during the occupation exceeded the level of two million.

The inflow of population originating from the core of the Reich into the occupied areas took place gradually. The first office staff came along with the invading *Wehrmacht* forces. Afterwards, an appeal was launched, calling for the return of the former inhabitants of these lands, who had left between 1919 and 1939. The inflow of the Germans was at that time not significant. It was only after the defeat of France that a higher interest in moving to the occupied areas was noted. Yet, the scale of these movements was by no means satisfactory for the occupant authorities. A propaganda action was started, whose results were also modest. It was only the intensification of the bombings by the Allies that caused the inflow of a larger number of evacuated persons from the threatened German towns. It is estimated that some 500,000 German citizens came to the areas incorporated into the Reich (i.e. excluding the General Governorship) from Germany in the years 1939–1944.

According to the Nazi plans the major role in colonisation of Poland was to be played by the Germans dispersed in many countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe. This population lived for many generations outside of the borders of Germany. The resettlement of the “ethnic” Germans was for the first time announced by Hitler during his speech in Reichstag on October 6th, 1939. This gave an impulse for the negotiations with the countries, in which German minority lived. The first agreements on the transfer of the “ethnic” Germans were concluded with the governments of Estonia and Latvia. The document on the relocation of the German population from Estonia was signed on 15 October 1939. The first transports of Germans left Estonia already on 18 October 1939, and by 15 November 1939 the main repatriation action, having encompassed 10,600 Estonian Germans, was over. A similar agreement was concluded on 30 October 1939 with the government of Latvia. Until 15 December 1939 more than 45,000 Germans left Latvia. In the following months the departures did not have such a mass character. According to the data as of October 15th, 1940, 61,934 ethnic Germans left the two Baltic States, of whom 12,868 left Estonia and 49,066 – Latvia. Together with the persons previously resettled, 70 thousand Baltic Germans moved to the Great Reich. They were directed mainly to the Land of Warta (56,000 persons) and to the district Gdańsk-West Prussia (6,000). The remaining ones were settled in Silesia and in the regency of Ciechanów. The Germans brought to the Land of Warta from Estonia and Latvia were placed mainly in towns (36,000). Thus,

18,000 settled in Poznań, 6,000 in Lodz, and 11,600 in the remaining towns of the Land of Warta (in the regency of Poznań – 3,865, in the regency of Inowrocław – 5,392, and in the regency of Lodz – 2,343 persons). The peasant settlers were given 136,300 hectares of confiscated land, having belonged to the Polish owners. On this land 1,969 farms were established (Sobczak, 1966, pp. 163–164).

Simultaneously with the negotiations conducted in the capitals of the Baltic States, the talks started between the representatives of the Third Reich and the Soviet authorities on the agreement concerning the resettlement of the Germans living in the former eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth. Germans living on these territories were classified into three categories – the so-called Volhynian Germans (*Wolhynien Deutsche*), Galician Germans (*Galizien Deutsche*) and Białystok Germans (*Narew Deutsche*). After the consultations and agreements concerning the technical aspects, the repatriation started of the German population. It lasted between 18 December 1939 and 26 October 1940. According to the German documentation, the demarcation line was crossed by 128,379 persons, of whom 64,554 from the region of Volhynia, 55,597 from Galicia, and 8,228 from the region of Białystok. The majority of them, some 65%, were directed to the Land of Warta. They obtained therein 15,116 former Polish farms with the total area of 207,400 hectares. On the rural areas of the Land of Warta altogether close to 50,000 repatriates were settled. Relatively few repatriates were settled in Silesia (2,907 persons) (Sobczak, 1966, pp. 177–178).

The subsequent wave of the German settlers came to the extended Third Reich from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (the so-called *Bessarabien Deutsche* and *Bukowina Deutsche*). These two provinces belonged since 1940 to the Soviet Union. The resettlement of the Germans from Bessarabia, which was carried out over the waterway of Danube, encompassed altogether 93,548 persons. On the other hand, the Germans from the Northern Bukovina – 44,300 persons – were transported by railway to the General Governorship. The settlers were successively directed to the Polish lands incorporated into the Reich. Until October 1st, 1940, the Nazi authorities settled the following numbers of Germans originating from Bessarabia: in the land of Warta – 40,836, in the district Gdańsk-West Prussia – 40,836, and in Upper Silesia – only 68 persons. On the other hand, the largest group of Germans from Bukovina was settled in Upper Silesia – 25,681 persons, followed by the Land of Warta – 23,752 persons. Later on, the resettlement encompassed also the Germans having lived in Lithuania (50,054 persons), who were placed in transition camps. Similar actions, carried out with respect to the Germans from Romania, Hungary and occupied Yugoslavia, had a smaller scale. Likewise, less Germans from these countries came to the Polish territories.

The subsequent movements of the German population, undertaken in the later phase of the war, had already a different course and were carried out in a less organised manner. One can mention in this context the Germans living in the General Governorship, whose migration movements had a different political background, as well as the later inflow of the Germans from the Russian areas and from the eastern Belarus and Ukraine, caused by the retreat of the German army from the East.

It is difficult to present the overall balance of the migration movements of German population originating from eastern and southern Europe, who have been resettled to the occupied Polish territories. This is the effect of serious differences between the particular source reports. For general reference the balance published in the monumental work of Cz. Łuczak (Table III.6, Fig. III.5) is quoted.

Table III.6. German population settled until 15 September 1944 on Polish lands incorporated into the Reich

Country (region) of origin of the settlers	Number of ethnic Germans having settled									
	on incorporated lands		with distinction of:							
			Land of Warta		Silesia		Gdańsk- West Prussia		areas incorporated in East Prussia	
	totals	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	86,371	100	76,786	89.0	134	0.1	5,966	6.9	3,485	4.0
Eastern Little Poland (Małopolska), Volhynia, Narew region	109,336	100	97,020	88.7	5,091	4.7	3,264	2.9	3,961	3.7
Lublin region	25,475	100	24,545	96.4	–	–	930	3.6	–	–
Bessarabia	88,022	100	47,892	54.4	86	0.1	40,044	45.5	–	–
Northern and Southern Bukovina	64,024	100	33,150	52.4	30,445	47.6	–	–	11	–
Dobrudja	11,201	100	11,150	99.6	51	0.4	–	–	–	–
“Old Romania”	1,975	100	1,612	87.7	360	18.3	–	–	3	–
USSR (Black Sea coast)	241,194	100	241,194	100.0	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bosnia	3,287	100	3,184	96.9	103	3.1	–	–	–	–
Alsace	600	100	–	–	600	100.0	–	–	–	–
Totals	631,485	100	536,951	85.1	36,870	5.8	50,204	7.9	7,460	1.2

Source: Łuczak (1993, p. 169).

The documentation put together by Cz. Łuczak (1993, p. 169), and referred to here, shows that until 15 September 1940 altogether 631,500 Germans had been settled on the territories incorporated into the Reich. One should add to this number the Germans settled in the General Governorship (43,200 persons). Other statistical data are contained in the collective report (*Polska Zachodnia...*, 1961, p. 296). According to the data there contained 487,584 Germans were resettled to the areas stretching between river Bug in the East and Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers in the West from the territories of eastern and southern

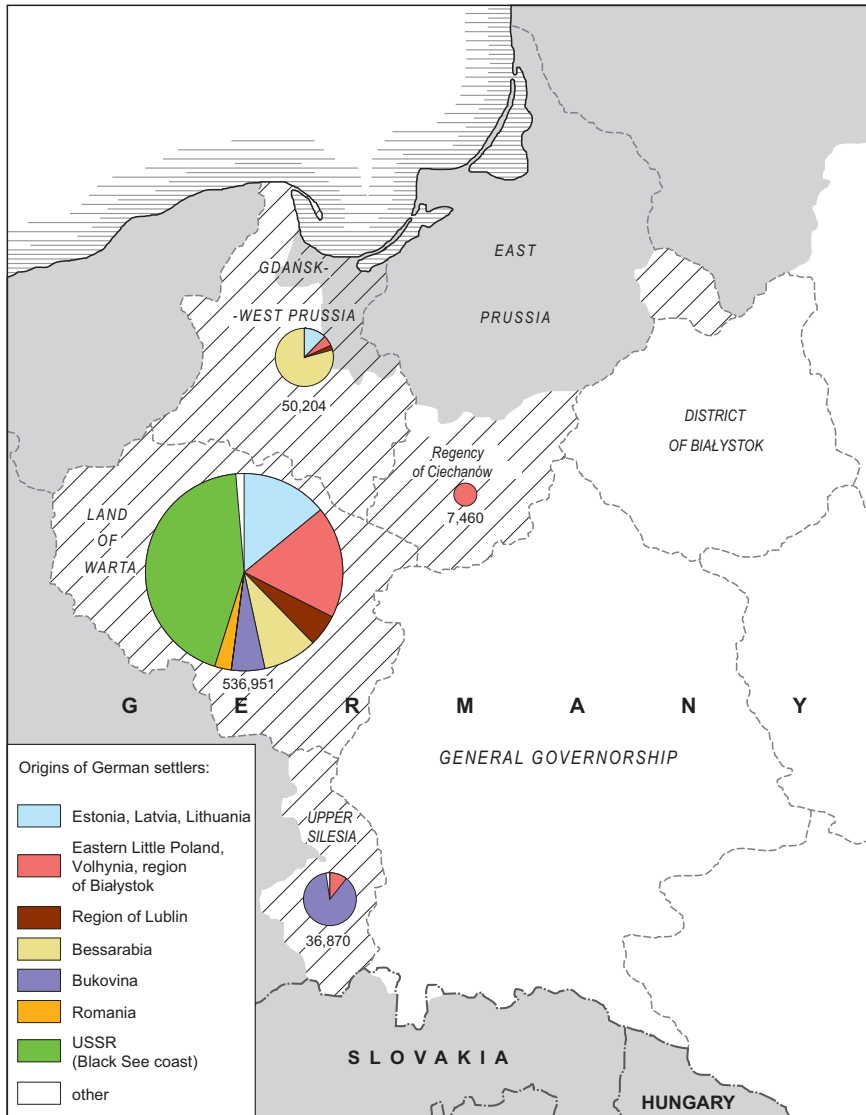


Fig. III.5. Settling of German population on Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich until September 15th, 1944

Source: own elaboration.

Europe. Then, the work of J. Sobczak (1966, p. 320) proposes that the total number of the relocated Germans was equal 770,577, of whom 404,612 were supposedly settled on the Polish lands. Of the latter number, 245,000 would settle in the Land of Warta, 57,000 in Gdańsk-West Prussia, 8,000 on the area incorporated into East Prussia, and 38,000 in a part of the voivodship of Silesia. Even

if we do not consider in detail the different statistics and the reliability of each of the numbers quoted, we can state that during the period of occupation the Nazi authorities relocated to the occupied Polish territories, side by side with the Germans having German citizenship (as of August 31st, 1939, that is), more than half a million Germans originating from many countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The German authorities tried in the middle of the occupation period to determine the degree of Germanising of the areas incorporated into the Reich. An appropriate synthesis was carried out, in which the “actual” and the “potential” Germans were jointly considered. They were classified into several groups, featuring different degree of association with the German nationality (*Reichsdeutsche*, *Volksdeutsche*, German settlers, etc.). These data are quite interesting, but attention must be paid to the fact that they do not match adequately other statistical materials. The calculations were carried out in 1942, when the German propaganda announced the victory at an arm’s length. The population subject to this kind of census did not expect a change in the political situation and would relatively easily give in to the pressure from the German administration. Despite the inflow of the German settlers from many countries the share of the German population attained merely 18.8% (see Table III.7).

In order to accelerate the processes of Germanising on the territories, incorporated into the Reich in 1940, the authorities of the occupants introduced the so-called “nationality list”. This list defined four categories of “Germandom”. Groups I and II would give the German state belongingness and the citizenship of the Third Reich, in group III German citizenship was granted conditionally for ten years, similarly as in the case of group IV. In the subsequent years certain facilitations were introduced as to the inclusion on the so-called *Volksliste*. According to the data as of January 1944 there were approximately 9,500,000 inhabitants on the areas incorporated into the Reich, of whom 6,015,000 (63.3% of the total population number) were treated as Poles, 1,761,000 were those with groups III and IV of the *Volksliste* (18.5%), and 1,724,000 were considered Germans (18.2%). Forced enlisting on the nationality list was meant to secure the possibility of recruiting Poles to the *Wehrmacht* forces (Grabowski, 2009a, pp. 67–68).

The fundamental objective of the large-scale resettlement actions, undertaken by the German authorities, was to change the ethnic structure of the occupied territories, particularly those included in the Reich. The Nazi authorities were especially keen on a rapid Germanising of the region of Greater Poland and the adjacent areas, that is – first of all the so-called Land of Warta. The number of Germans living in this area before the war was 324,000. By 1941 this number increased to 786,000. The increase was achieved due to the settling in the Land of Warta of the Germans from: the Baltic States – 48,673, Volhynia – 88,548, the region of Lublin – 20,578, Bukovina – 9,038, and Bessarabia – 32,824, as well as the inflow of the German citizens from Germany proper (262,839 persons). Thereby, a rapid increase of the German population numbers took place in the first years of the occupation (1939 – 324,600, 1941 – 786,500, 1943 – 946,400). Hence, the percentage share of Germans in the total population number of the region increased, too – from 6.6% in 1939 to 21.2% in 1943.

This increase of the number of Germans was particularly visible in the cities of Poznań (increase from 6,000 in 1939 to 93,589 in 1944), Lodz (from 60,000 in 1939 to 140,721 in 1944), and Inowrocław (from 956 in 1939 to 10,713 in 1944) (see *Polska Zachodnia...*, 1961, p. 294). The future was to show that these significant demographic and ethnic changes were short-lived, for at the beginning of 1945, when the news that the Soviet army was approaching reached the inhabitants of these areas, virtually entire German population left the occupied Polish territories.

Table III.7. Germans on the territories incorporated into the Third Reich according to the German estimates of 1942

Provinces	<i>Volksdeutsche</i> in 1935 according to own calculations of the German minority and the census of 1931 (in '000)	Enlisted until the end of 1942 on the <i>DVL</i> 1 and 2 (in '000)	Germans on the entire area of the incorporated German territories in the East at the end of 1942 (in '000)	- out of this: <i>Reichsdeutsche</i> (in '000)	- out of this: <i>Volksdeutsche</i> of the <i>DVL</i> 1 and 2 groups (in '000)	- out of this: the settlers (in '000)	Total population number on the areas incorporated to the Reich as of the end of 1942 (in '000)	Share of Germans in total population numbers (in %)
East Prussia	143	250	64	26	30	8	1,000	6.4
Gdańsk-West Prussia			376	50	275	51	1,650	22.8
Land of Warta	170	185	774	132	400	242	4,400	17.6
Upper Silesia	69*	280	596	192	370	34	2,600	22.9
Totals	382	715	1,810	400	1,075	335	9,650	18.5

* according to the census of 1931.

Source: Kaczmarek (2006, p. 193).

III.5. Transportation of Polish citizens to work in the Reich and to the Nazi concentration camps

The dynamic development of the arms industry, working to satisfy the demand generated by war and conscription of several million recruits to the German army brought about a deficit of labour force in the Third Reich. The designs, associated with mass employment of foreigners had been envisaged already before the war. They became very much on time as the war expanded. The very first

groups of Polish workers were being sent to the Reich immediately after the September campaign in Poland had ended. This took place in parallel with employment of the Polish POWs. After the *Wehrmacht* had marched into the Polish territories, the street round-ups started, and the young people caught in them (the so-called *Zivilgefangene*, civilian prisoners of war) were sent to work in Germany. In this period several tens of thousands of young people were sent to work in agriculture, mainly in East Prussia and in Pomerania. These actions were not altogether planned and were based on incidental, spontaneous lower-level decisions. The mass recruitment started at the end of 1939. The direct cause lied in the needs of the German industry, whose managers turned to the administrative authorities with the demand of providing during 1940 one million Polish workers to the Reich. This was the beginning of the large-scale action of forced movements of labour force for economic purposes. The action lasted, with varying intensity, over the entire period of war. It was conducted in a somewhat different manner on the territories incorporated into the Third Reich and in the General Governorship. Within the areas incorporated into the Reich the recruitment depended also significantly on the local conditions. It took a different course in Silesia, where a shortage of manpower existed, than in the overpopulated agricultural areas. In view of the fact that Polish population tried to avoid being sent to Germany, the recruitment took on an increasingly forced character. On the areas incorporated into the Reich the dominating form was to organise transports on the basis of individual summons. Each of the administrative units had a predefined quota, the number of workers that were to be sent to the Reich within a pre-defined deadline.

In the General Governorship, recruitment was initially based on free will. The failure of this system resulted in application of force. Repression started with respect to those ignoring the summons. Despite the involvement of the entire administrative apparatus in this activity, the numbers of workers sent to the Reich were well below the assumed and obligatory quota. The authorities of the General Governorship started to apply in certain periods even the street round-ups and the pacification of the entire villages, from which young inhabitants were taken and sent to the Reich. Simultaneously, an appropriate propaganda and material motivations were applied, both with respect to the persons volunteering as well as the local administration or the “blue police” (Polish policemen serving under German authority), who were obliged to support the recruitment action. The authorities of the General Governorship tried in principle to fulfil the quota they were supposed to satisfy. In certain periods only they did on purpose not fulfil the too high quota in view of their own economic needs. The decrease of the numbers of workers supplied was being justified to the central authorities by the exhaustion of own local resources of labour force.

Poles sent to work represented all strata of Polish society. Given the class structure in existence at that time, peasants dominated among those sent to work. Yet, there were also numerous blue-collar workers and students, representatives of the intelligentsia, craftsmen, etc. This population was dominated by the low-educated people. Still, some university graduates were also sent to Germany and worked mostly as industry workers. Due to the intensifying shortage

of manpower in the Reich, which appeared also in agriculture, recruitment of young women was started, too. According to the German documentation, female labour force constituted in September 1944, 34.5% of the total of persons deported to work from the General Governorship and the areas incorporated into the Reich. The persons sent to work were not only Poles, though. The Ukrainians, living in the eastern part of the General Governorship, were also affected by the deportations to work in the Reich. After the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, when the reach of the Nazi authority extended into the eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth, recruitment started also there. In view of the ethnically mixed character of these areas, the persons transported to Germany were of quite differentiated nationalities (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, Russians, etc.). The share of the Ukrainians among the persons sent to work from the General Governorship increased significantly after the district of Galicia had been incorporated in the General Governorship. It should also be mentioned that a certain number of Jews, supplied with fictitious Polish documents, managed to move to Germany and to survive the war there.

The deportations of labour force to Germany lasted continuously between the end of September 1939 and the beginning of 1945. Initially, bigger numbers of workers came from the areas incorporated into the Reich. In the subsequent phase a much higher recruitment took place in the General Governorship, which disposed of much bigger resources of labour force. Thus, between 1 September 1939 and 20 December 1944 altogether 1,272,445 workers were transported from the General Governorship, the highest number having been registered in 1942 – 398,959 persons (Table III.8).

Table III.8. Numbers of persons deported from the General Governorship to work in the Reich in the years 1939–1945

Period	Number of deportees
1.09–31.12.1939	36,675
1.01–30.06.1940	272,238
1.07–31.12.1940	29,724
1.01–30.06.1941	97,921
1.07–31.12.1941	125,577
1.01–30.06.1942	164,727
1.07–31.12.1942	234,232
1.01–30.06.1943	129,745
1.07–31.12.1943	45,823
1.01–30.06.1944	52,446
1.07–20.12.1944	83,337
Total	1,272,445

Source: Luczak (1993, p. 181).

The increasing scale of the deportations to work caused that more and more Polish workers were employed in the German economy. According to the official documentation, between 31 January 1941 and 30 September 1944 the number of persons employed in Germany, originating from the lands incorporated to the Third Reich and from the General Governorship increased more than twice and attained almost 1.7 million (Table III.9).

Table III.9. Numbers of workers employed in the Reich originating from the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich and from the General Governorship in the years 1941–1944

Date	Numbers of persons in forced labour		
	totals	of whom:	
		from General Governorship	from the areas incorporated in the Reich
31.01.1941	798,101	–	–
25.04.1941	872,672	–	–
25.09.1941	1,007,561	–	–
20.01.1942	1,032,196	–	–
20.05.1942	1,194,919	775,283	419,636
10.10.1942	1,340,322	896,849	443,473
20.11.1942	1,344,692	895,916	448,776
31.12.1942	1,372,045	918,117	453,928
31.12.1943	1,577,232	1,054,537	522,695
31.03.1944	1,583,136	1,028,287	554,849
30.06.1944	1,625,223	1,032,752	592,471
30.09.1944	1,662,336	1,053,027	609,309

Source: Luczak (1993, p. 161).

Based on the source study of Cz. Łuczak (1993) we can relatively well estimate the general scale of movements of the Polish population, caused by the deportations to work in the Third Reich. Thus, conform to the data from the author quoted, until July 7th, 1944, 1,214,000 persons (of whom – 235,200 Ukrainians) were transported to work in Germany from the General Governorship (including the district of Galicia) and from the district of Białystok. Then, in November and December 1944, further 16,377 persons were sent to work, and after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising – also 67,000 persons from Warsaw. The total number of the deported to work from these territories amounted, therefore, to more than 1,297,000. One should add to this number the persons deported from the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich. The occupying authorities deported to Germany from these territories until the end of war 700 thousand inhabitants, of whom 670 thousand were of Polish nationality. Thus, altogether, from the General Governorship and the lands incorporated

into the Reich during the war, around 2 million people were deported to work in Germany. It is estimated that 1.7 million of them were Poles. It is more statistically difficult to determine the number of persons transported from the eastern territories of the 2nd Commonwealth. Their number is estimated as equal roughly 500,000. Summing up, we obtain the figure of 2.5 million citizens of the 2nd Commonwealth, who were obliged or forced to leave their native localities and go to work in Germany.

This number of the deported persons does not include the Polish POWs, whose status was turned to the one of workers, and whose situation was analogous to that of the other persons working in Germany. By adding 300,000 of the Polish POWs and a group of Poles deported from the Land of Warta to France (23,500), Cz. Łuczak (1979, p. 161) obtained the ultimate total number of persons in this group, namely 2,857,500. This was, therefore, the total number of Polish citizens deported to work in Germany from the territory of the pre-war Polish state. The workers deported to the Reich did not constitute, as mentioned already, a homogeneous ethnic group. Poles, however, dominated clearly. On the other hand, until the second half of 1941 workers from the Polish territories constituted the dominating group of foreign labour in Germany. It was only after the aggression against the Soviet Union and mass deportations of the Belarusian, Ukrainian and Russian population that the share of the Polish citizens decreased, but it remained high, amounting to roughly 1/3 of the total number of foreigners working in the German economy. These workers, though, were treated much worse and were exploited much more than the employees of the French, Belgian or Italian nationalities. That is also why Polish workers were suffering high losses. Mortality brought about by hard living conditions, bombings by the Allies and direct military activities in the final phase of the war was very high among them.

Polish workers in Germany were deprived of any form of legal protection and could be arbitrarily exploited in economic terms, while earning a minimum financial compensation. They lived like slaves, and their conditions of existence depended solely upon the good will of the employers, whom they were not allowed to change by themselves. On the basis of an order from Goering of 8 March 1940 they were exempted from the competence of the German judicial system, and were subordinated to the police authorities. The subsequent order, issued by Himmler on 30 March 1944, entitled only *Gestapo* to the consideration of the offences of the Polish workers. Both these institutions were given the right to proceed with immediate execution in case of a "threat" to the security of the Reich. This right was made use of very frequently in a completely arbitrary manner. The slightest sign of pretended or actual insubordination sufficed. Polish workers, sentenced for this reason, were killed by public hanging.¹⁸

¹⁸ Polish male workers were also sentenced to death for entering into sexual relations with German women. It was of no importance, upon whose initiative such relations were undertaken. This was usually taking place on the farms, where the German owner was dead or sent to the military. In case such a "crime" was found out, the Pole would be hanged, while the German woman would be publicly branded for having desecrated the German race. Such a kind of penal procedure was applied, in principle, only with respect to Poles and the citizens of the USSR.

Polish workers, deported to work in Germany, lived in difficult conditions. In the countryside they would not stay in the homes of the hosts, but in various premises of very low quality. Those, who were employed in factories, were put in various labour camps. The legal working hours were not applied in their case. They were obliged to wear the letter “P” sewn on their clothes. The degrading and harsh conditions of living and work were the causes of high mortality. Hard work, poor nutrition, death sentences, as well as military activities (including bombing by the Allied forces) brought about the death of approximately 137,000 Polish workers in Germany (Łuczak, 1993, p. 556).

Depending upon the current needs of the Germany economy, Polish workers were sent to all the regions of Germany. They were employed both in the large arms industry factories, and in thousands of farms. In the final phase of the war their highest numbers worked in the provinces of Brandenburg, East Prussia and Lower Silesia (see Table III.10).

Table III.10. Distribution of the deported Polish workers over the territory of the Third German Reich

Name of state (land, district)	Numbers of the deported as of:			
	25.04.1941	25.09.1941	31.12.1943	30.09.1944
Germany	811,069	934,851	1,431,347 ¹	1,499,690 ¹
including: Bavaria	57,420	69,670	68,690	71,711
Brandenburg	99,285	109,096	162,415	162,391
Lower Silesia	59,035	79,894	116,831	132,496
Gdańsk-West Prussia ²	21,948	33,847	39,948	32,274
Upper Silesia ³	27,501	28,875	72,034	74,222
Rhineland ⁴	27,544	29,793	50,217	54,356
Pomerania	86,233	92,764	118,094	116,105
East Prussia	52,879	67,818	130,625	144,511
Saxony	32,597	35,402	50,711	54,218
Westfalen	36,572	39,670	90,477	91,590
Remaining areas of the Old Reich (<i>Altreich</i>)	310,055	348,022	531,305	565,816
Alsace and Lorraine	3,344	3,685		
Sudety Mts.	17,331	25,081	45,975	49,286
Austria with a part of Slovakia included in it	40,928	43,944	99,910	112,791
Land of Warta ⁵	–	–	–	569
Totals	872,672	1,007,561	1,577,232	1,662,336

¹ Jointly with Alsace and Lorraine.

² For the part of the district having belonged to Germany before September 1st, 1939.

³ For the part having belonged to Germany before September 1st, 1939.

⁴ Since 1943 – jointly with Luxembourg.

⁵ Workers deported in 1944 from the General Governorship to the Land of Warta.

Source: Łuczak (1993, p. 545).

As mentioned already, during the entire occupation the Nazi authorities conducted the activities aimed at liquidation of the Polish leading elite, first of all intelligentsia and the landed gentry. In the framework of the respective action, known under the cryptonym AB, altogether 52,000 persons were killed already in the first year of occupation. These activities were carried out with different intensity across the territory of entire Poland. Side by side with physical extermination, the method was applied of deportation to the concentration camps, located mainly on the areas of the Reich. The first such organised action was to arrest in April and May 1940 more than 20 thousand Poles inhabiting the areas incorporated into the Reich. They were deported to the concentration camps and in their majority exterminated. A similar action was carried out at more or less the same time in the General Governorship. It encompassed more than ten thousand persons. During the entire period of occupation sending to the concentration camps was one of the methods aiming of keeping the Polish society in terror. The response to the activities of the resistance movement was constituted by the pacification actions, whose effect was to send population to the concentration camps, which fulfilled the extermination function, and, to a lesser degree, were also used for economic purposes. More than 130 thousand Poles were sent to the concentration camps in the years of occupation (Łuczak, 1993, p. 113).

After the aggression against Poland the Nazi Germany extended the existing and established new concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager*). Thus, in addition to such known camps as Sachsenhausen, Dachau, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen, or the women's camp in Ravensbrück, the new ones were created, like Stutthof, Neuengamme, Gross-Rosen, Bergen-Belsen, or Dora-Mittelbau. They were subordinated to the Main Office of the Security of the Reich (*RSHA – Reichssicherheitshauptamt*). The system of the concentration camps was connected with the system of forced labour camps, developed by the industrial corporations, mainly of the arms industry (the so-called penal labour camps and forced labour camps – *Strafearbeitslager* and *Zwangsarbeitslager*). For the workers originating from Eastern Europe, mainly from Poland, they took on the name of *Ostarbeitslager*, while for Jews – *Judenarbeitslager*.

On the territory of the Third Reich and in 17 countries, occupied by the Germans, the Nazi authorities organised approximately 9,000 labour camps and sub-camps. Numerous Polish citizens, both Poles and Jews, were sent to these camps. It is worth noting that in August and September 1939 some 2,000 activists of the Union of Poles in Germany were arrested and put in the concentration camps. The subsequent repressive action was deportation to the camp in Sachsenhausen of 184 professors and research employees of the Jagiellonian University and the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy in Cracow in November 1939. Mass deportations of Poles and Jews to the concentration camps started afterwards. This concerned mainly Polish administration officers, teachers, representatives of the landed gentry and the clergy. Living conditions in the concentration camps were very difficult. According to rough estimates, more than half of the inmates of the concentration camps died of exhaustion or due to direct extermination. Thus, for instance, 1,640 Catholic priests were kept in the camp

of Dachau, of who 861 died or were killed. Approximately 40,000 Polish women passed through the camp of Ravensbrück, of whom roughly 17,000 did not survive the stay in the camp. It is estimated that 10,000 Poles died in the camp of Sachsenhausen¹⁹, and 20,000 in Mauthausen²⁰. The losses among the imprisoned Jews were even much higher.

In the framework of the activities aimed at Germanising the so-called racially highly fit element, young women started to be sent to the Reich²¹. At the same time planned deportation of Polish children of “Nordic” aspect to the Reich started, as well. This took place without any consent from parents or care-takers. According to the rough estimates some 50 thousand Polish children were sent to the Reich. A vast majority of them did not return to the home country after the war. At the special order of Himmler’s several tens of thousands of appropriately selected persons were sent from Silesia and Greater Poland to be subject to an adequate denationalising pressure. Taking into account all the categories of population we can estimate that in the effect of the purposeful activities of the German invader authorities more than three million Polish citizens were deported to the Reich for a shorter or longer period of time from the areas constituting Polish territories in 1939.

III.6. The movements and the Holocaust of the Jewish population

Complete implementation of the envisaged design of extermination of the Jewish population required from the Nazi authorities to undertake appropriate technical preparations. Selection of Polish territory as the main location of the Holocaust resulted from the well justified objective motivations. First of all, Polish lands constituted the largest concentration of Jews in Europe. For logistic reasons (primarily related to transport) establishment of the extermination camps in Poland was the most convenient solution, since it required the least of population movements. A different kind of reason was associated with the legal status of Polish territories. According to the German authorities this territory was irreversibly conquered. It was deprived of any trace of autonomy. There were neither local authorities nor organisations collaborating with the occupants. Hence, no decisions, even at a local level, would require any sort of agreements or confirmations.

¹⁹In August 1944 in the camp of Sachsenhausen the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish resistance Home Army, General Stefan Grot-Rowecki was murdered.

²⁰Bishop Edmund Bursche, the head of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Poland, died of exhaustion in the camp of Mauthausen on July 26th, 1940.

²¹These young women were placed in appropriately organised “pensions”, where they were obliged to “receive” German army officers. The objective of this concept was to secure bearing of children fulfilling the respective racial criteria.

The country was cut off from the contacts with the western allies, while total war was being fought in the East. The opinion, forwarded from time to time in the West, that location of the extermination camps in Poland was motivated by the anti-Semitic attitude of the Polish society, finds no evidence whatsoever in the documents.

Presentation of the scale of movements of the Jewish population, directed to the camps, or locations of extermination, requires consideration of a number of statistical issues, which give rise to significant controversies in the literature. It is relatively easy to determine the number of Jews living on Polish territory on the eve of the Holocaust. The other issues are more difficult and the scholars differ essentially in their assessment. Thus, we can mention that the opinions as to the number of Polish Jews having survived the extermination differ significantly. Likewise, the literature of the subject mentions various numbers concerning the total number of European Jews killed on the territory of Poland. The numbers of victims of the particular camps are estimated differently, as well.

The basic statistical information, which allows for a relatively precise determination of the number of Jewish population in Poland at the beginning of the World War II, that is – just before the Holocaust started – is provided by the results of the national population census, carried out in 1931. There were two questions in the census, associated with the ethnicity. The first of these concerned the mother tongue, and the second – the religious denomination. Out of the total of 31,915,800 Polish citizens, according to the census, 2,732,600 persons declared everyday use of Yiddish or Hebrew language, while 3,113,900 persons declared the Judaic religion as theirs. The latter criterion was in Polish conditions unambiguous and indicated uniquely the persons of Jewish extraction. The language criterion was in ethnic terms of little use. Many of the culturally assimilated Jews used, or at least knew well Polish language, and could declare it as their mother tongue. On the other hand, the correlation between religion and nationality was very tight. All the interested scholars treat religion as the only reliable determinant of the number of Jewish population in Poland. Hence, the number of people of Jewish nationality or extraction was in 1931 in Poland very close to 3,113,900.

The spatial distribution of Jewish population was uneven. They lived mainly in central and eastern Poland. There were relatively few Jews on the areas of the former Prussian annexation, that is – in the voivodships of Poznań, Pomerania and Silesia (see Table III.11).

Jewish population lived primarily in towns. The largest Jewish communities existed in Warsaw, Lodz, Lwów (L'viv), Vilna, Kielce, Białystok, Cracow, Lublin and Grodno (Fig. III.6). In many small towns of central, but especially of eastern Poland, Jewish population dominated. They were mainly active in trade, intermediation, brokerage and crafts.

Jewish population featured in the 1930s in Poland the natural increase between 6% and 8%. Emigration to Palestine and to the United States was at that time insignificant and totalled only a bit more than ten thousand persons. Thus, considering the scale of the natural increase, it is estimated that by 1939 the number of Jewish population in Poland increased to approximate-

ly 3,350,000. This estimate was also adopted by Cz. Madajczyk (1970, p. 328). According to other estimates the number of Jews in Poland was between 3 million and 3.5 million.

Table III.11. Numbers of Jewish population in Poland in 1931 according to voivodships

Voivodship	Population numbers				
	total	out of this, declaring:			
		Yiddish (Jewish) and Hebrew languages		Judaic religion	
		absolute number	in %	absolute number	in %
Capital city of Warsaw	1,171,900	333,300	28.5	352,700	30.1
Warsaw	2,529,200	215,100	8.5	219,100	8.7
Lodz	2,632,000	359,400	13.6	378,500	14.4
Kielce	2,935,700	304,900	10.4	317,000	10.8
Lublin	2,464,900	259,500	10.5	314,300	12.8
Białystok	1,643,900	195,000	11.9	197,400	12.0
Vilna	1,276,000	108,900	8.5	110,800	8.7
Nowogródek	1,057,200	77,000	7.3	82,900	7.8
Polesie	1,131,900	113,000	10.0	114,000	10.1
Volhynia	2,085,600	205,500	9.9	207,800	10.0
Poznań	2,106,500	3,300	0.2	7,200	0.3
Pomerania	1,089,100	2,000	0.2	3,400	0.3
Silesia	1,295,000	6,500	0.5	19,000	1.5
Cracow	2,297,800	128,000	5.6	173,600	7.6
Lwów	3,127,400	232,900	7.5	342,400	11.0
Stanisławów	1,480,300	109,400	7.4	139,700	9.5
Tarnopol	1,600,400	78,900	4.9	134,100	8.4
Totals	31,915,800	2,732,600	8.6	3,113,900	9.8

Source: *Mały Rocznik ... 1937* (1938, pp. 21–25).

The crucial event, which enabled Hitler to start the realisation of the program of extermination of the European Jews, which he had conceived long before, including, first of all, extermination of Polish Jews, was the liquidation of the Polish state. Aggression against Poland was the turning point and since that instance the implementation of the idea of physical annihilation of the Jewish nation was started. The very first Jewish victims were those, who were killed in the bombing of Wieluń by the German *Luftwaffe* in the early morning hours of the first day of the war. Several hundred Poles and Jews died in this bombing. The consecutive bombing attacks targeted Warsaw, Cracow, Tarnów, Lwów, etc. These military actions were, of course, not oriented specifically against Jews, and they affected

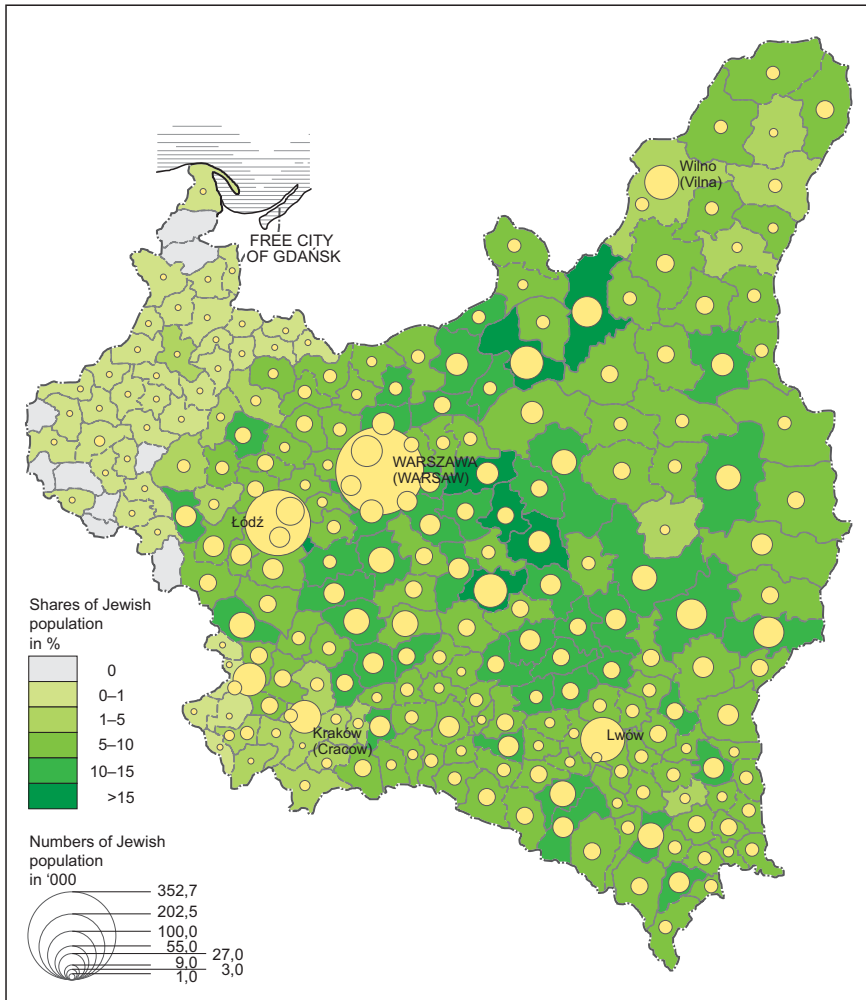


Fig. III.6. Spatial distribution of Jewish population in Poland, according to larger towns and counties, as of 1931

Source: own elaboration.

the entire civilian population. They constituted the announcement of a new kind of war in Europe, unlike the preceding ones, the ruthless and total war, violating all kinds of moral and humanitarian principles²². The detachments of *Wehrmacht*, marching into Poland, committed the first beastly executions of the incident-

²² Total war, conducted by the *Wehrmacht* forces (*Vernichtungskrieg*, actually: the war of attrition), did not start on June 22nd, 1941, as this is usually assumed in the western, and especially the Russian literature of the subject, but on September 1st, 1939. This dating is also explained and justified by the German historian Böhler (2009).

tally encountered Jewish groups. These events were of incidental character, but they demonstrated the attitude of the Nazis towards the Jewish population.

After the demarcation line between the zones of influence of Germany and the USSR had been established, there were on the territories occupied by the Germans approximately 1,450,000 persons of Jewish origin. The situation of the Jewish population in the two zones was entirely different. In the German zone discrimination started, followed by intensifying repressions. On the territories incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR and Belarusian SSR the Jewish population had generally a positive attitude towards the Soviet occupant authorities, which proclaimed the slogans of equal rights and the struggle against all kinds of anti-Semitism. Numerous posts in the local administration were given to Jews, who enjoyed much higher degree of trust from the side of the Soviet authorities, and whose sympathies for the communist cause were made use of by the Soviets. This phenomenon brought thereafter very disadvantageous consequences for the Jewish communities. Immediately after the German army took respective areas in June 1941, pogroms of the Jewish population would in some places occur, involving deaths of the victims (like, e.g., in Jedwabne). Local Polish population treated Jews as collaborationists, supporting the Soviet communist system. This opinion was often a too sweeping generalisation, since many religious and wealthy Jews approached with distrust and reserve the communist authorities, who proclaimed the atheist ideology and did not hide the intention of liquidating the private property. Yet, despite of this, the conviction of the generally pro-communist attitude of the Jewish community is quite popular in Polish, Ukrainian and Lithuanian literature of the subject. This proposition often serves to justify the acts of physical aggression against the Jewish population from the side of the closest neighbours, which took place in some localities. It is known that after the Soviet army retreated, the anti-Jewish excesses, which brought numerous innocent victims, encompassed the areas of eastern Poland, the Baltic countries, as well as the western parts of Belarus and Ukraine.

At the instant of the German aggression against the USSR the demarcation line, established on 28 August, 1939, was liquidated and soon the entire territory of the former Polish state was under German control.

At the beginning of war Hitler considered the possibility of forming within the region of Lublin a “reserve” for Jews, resettled from other areas, occupied by Germany. This Jewish “reserve” would constitute, in the light of the opinion of Himmler’s, pronounced on 20 May 1940, a transitory place of stay for Jews, who were to be deported in the future to Madagascar (Łuczak, 1993, p. 125). This idea soon turned out unrealistic and the variant of total extermination was chosen.²³

²³ Polish literature on the Holocaust is extremely vast. Quite extensive bibliographical information is provided, in particular, in the books: *Wysiedlenie...* (1985), Tomaszewski (1993), Tomaszewski and Żbikowski (2001), Fuks (1999) or Chodakiewicz (2000). A survey of the scientific problems, related to the origins, course and tragic effects of the Holocaust, against the background of the rich literature of the subject, is provided in the known book of Bauer (1982), and in the equally frequently quoted book, published in the English and Polish language versions, by Marrus (1989, 1993).

The first two years of the Nazi administration in Poland are referred to as the stage of indirect extermination. This had been yet before the conference, which took place on January 20th, 1942, in Wannsee by Berlin, where decision on total extermination of the Jewish population was taken (*Endlösung der Judenfrage* – the terminal solution to the Jewish question).²⁴

Initially the repressions took the form of harassment, expropriations, forced labour and gradual isolation. Discrimination against Jews intensified with time. On the territory of the General Governorship since December 1st, 1939, Jews were obliged to wear an appropriate sign, most often a white band with the star of David. For purposes of isolating the Jewish population and to facilitate its economic exploitation, Jewish ghettos started to be established. They were created in the localities of higher concentration of Jewish population. The very first Jewish ghetto was established in Piotrków Trybunalski already in October 1939. Until autumn of 1942 approximately 400 ghettos were created on the Polish territories (Żbikowski, 2005, p. 226). The biggest ghetto was established in Warsaw (see Table 12), and the second biggest – in Łódź. The consecutive isolated Jewish quarters were delineated in Cracow, Lublin, Częstochowa, Białystok, Vilna and other towns.

In the establishment of the ghettos German authorities would be directed primarily by the technical prerequisites. Jews would get concentrated in these parts of the respective towns, where there had already been a high concentration of the Jewish population. Thereby, the scale of the necessary movements and exchange of apartments between the Jewish population and the other inhabitants of the town was minimised. Transport logistics was taken into account, as well. Efforts were made to transport, with a limited number of railway cars, and in a short time period, the maximum number of people, who had anyway been condemned to die.

Germans applied two basic methods of liquidation of the small ghettos. The first one consisted in shooting on place the local Jews. The place of the mass execution was situated in the direct neighbourhood of the locality, in which the Jews lived. The second method of extermination had an indirect character. Jews were, namely, transported from the smaller to the bigger ghettos, from where, after some time, all of them would be brought successively to the extermination camps. These camps were on purpose located in the vicinity of bigger ghettos. That is why the extermination camp in Treblinka was meant for the extermination of Warsaw Jews, while Jews from Lublin were murdered at Majdanek, or

²⁴ At the Wannsee conference the number of Jews to be included in the extermination program was quoted. According to these data in the General Governorship 2,284,000 Jews were to be killed, on the Polish territories, incorporated into the Reich – 420,000, in the district of Białystok – 400,000, in Belarus – 446,500, in the USSR and in Ukraine – 2,994,700, in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia – 74,200, in Hungary – 742,800, in Romania – 342,000, in Lithuania – 34,000, in Latvia – 3,500, in Greece – 96,600, in Slovakia – 88,000, in Bulgaria – 48,000, in Croatia – 40,000, in Serbia – 10,000. The respective calculations accounted also for the Western European Jews, who were to be exterminated as well: from France – 865,000, The Netherlands – 160,800, and Belgium – 43,000, etc. (Weiss, 2006, p. 69). This calculation implies that conform to the Nazi estimates close to 35% of all the European Jews to be exterminated would come from the Polish territories.

transported to Sobibór or Bełżec, also located not far from Lublin. On the other hand, Jews from Vilna, where no extermination camp was located in relative proximity, would be shot in the forests close to Ponary, a settlement situated 15 km from Vilna. The magnitude of a ghetto was to a large extent dependent upon the number of local Jews. Movement of Jews between the ghettos caused that in many of them (like, for instance, in Warsaw) more people stayed than had lived on the same area before the war. This situation, though, would last for just a short period of time, since in the case of too high density of Jewish population in a ghetto some kind of extermination action was usually undertaken. The list of the biggest ghettos on the Polish territory is provided in Table III.12.

Establishment of the ghettos, and thereafter their liquidation, were linked with resettlements. Although the areas in towns were chosen, where a lot of Jews had lived before, yet thousands of Poles and Jews had to change their places of residence, in order to satisfy the established limits of the ghettos, determined by Germans. In the subsequent phase smaller ghettos were liquidated, and the population was concentrated in the biggest of them. During such actions mass murders of the resettled Jewish population would take place.

Living conditions in the ghettos were dramatic. Several persons, even more than ten, would live in one room. Small feeding rations brought soon extreme exhaustion. Mortality in the ghettos was very high. Initially, older people, children and the sick died. Thereafter, the poorest strata of the population would die of hunger. This, however, was just the beginning of the still not fully organised extermination action.

On the basis of the decision from the General Governor Hans Frank, beginning with October 15th, 1941, Jews would be sentenced to death for the illegal departure from the ghetto. Since November 1941, aiding or hiding Jews was also subject to death penalty. The first mass extermination actions were started within the eastern borderlands of the 2nd Commonwealth. It was decided not to establish there the network of ghettos, as this was the case in the General Governorship, but to proceed at once with mass shooting. Thus, in particular, four special groups (*Einsatzgruppen*) were established, which followed the *Wehrmacht* forces and exterminated the entire local Jewish communities (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 127).

The implementation decisions, related to the Holocaust of Jews on the area of the General Governorship, had been taken, in principle, yet before the Wannsee conference, namely in October 1941. Upon the personal order from Himmler on October 13th, 1941, construction was started of the first mass extermination camp in Bełżec. This camp began functioning on March 17th, 1942. At that time the first transport of Jews from Lublin was put to death there. Even earlier, namely starting with December 7th, 1941, mass killing of Jews was started in the camp located near Chełmno. The biggest of the extermination camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau, after the highly efficient crematories had been installed, started its genocidal activity in the summer of 1942. Farther to the East, in May 1942, the camp in Sobibór was established, and since July 23rd, 1942, the camp in Treblinka was functioning.

Table III.12. The biggest Jewish ghettos during the Nazi occupation on the Polish territories

Locality	Number of Jewish population in 1939	Number of population in the ghetto	Date of deportation to the extermination camps or of execution
Warsaw	352,700	450,000	July 1942, September 1942, January 1943, May–September 1943
Lodz	202,500	200,000	September 1942, August 1944
Lwów	99,600	160,000	March 1942, July 1942, August 1942, June 1943
Sosnowiec-Będzin Czeladź-Dąbrowa Górnicza	approximately 100,000	approximately 100,000	May 1942, August 1942, August 1943
Vilna	55,000	57,000	August–September 1941, October–December 1941, September 1943
Białystok	39,200	56,000	February 1943, August 1943
Częstochowa	25,600	48,000	September–October 1942, January 1943, June 1943
Lublin	38,900	42,000	March–April 1942, November 1943
Tarnów	19,300	40,000	June 1942, September 1942, September 1943, November 1943
Rzeszów	12,000	32,000	July 1942
Kielce	18,000	27,000	August 1942, April 1943
Kowel	13,000	24,000	July 1942
Grodno	24,000	24,000	November–December 1942, January–February 1943
Przemyśl	18,400	22,000	July–September 1942, September 1943, February 1944
Piotrków Trybunalski	11,200	22,000	October 1942, May 1943
Międzyrzec Podlaski	13,500	20,000	August 1942, October 1942, May 1943
Cracow	56,500	18,000	May–June 1942, October 1942, March 1943
Nowy Sącz	9,000	16,000	August 1942
Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski	8,000	15,000	October 1942, January 1943, June 1943
Radomsko	14,000	14,000	October 1942

Sources: Gilbert (1998); Gawryszewski (2005); Tomaszewski, Żbikowski (eds. 2001).

After the establishment of the network of the extermination camps, in the middle of 1942 evacuation of the ghettos started. Deportations from the ghettos to the extermination camps were carried out in all the towns in a similar manner. Upon having obtained the respective orders, German police would surround the local ghetto and drive the Jews, destined to die, towards the nearest railway station, from where they were transported in cargo cars to the extermination camps. There, next to the gas chambers, selection was carried out. The group of the strongest was left to perform the auxiliary works, while the remaining ones were put to death in the gas chambers. The ones initially left alive were later on also executed.

Conform to the report of 5 January 1944 from the police general Odilo Globocnik, who was responsible for the technical realisation of the extermination of Jews in Poland, the planned action of extermination lasted until 17 October 1943. During this planned action some 70% of Jews residing in the General Governorship, in the district of Białystok and on the Polish territories, incorporated into the Reich, were killed. The remaining ones were exterminated either before or after this action. At the beginning of 1943 in the still existing 60 ghettos and in labour camps approximately 250,000 Jews were yet alive, while on the areas incorporated to the Reich – around 200,000. Most of them were killed until the end of that year (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, pp. 132–133).

The course of the extermination action can be shown on the example of the Warsaw ghetto. In view of the number of people in this ghetto, the genocide was carried out in phases, according to a definite plan. The procedure had a cyclical character and the rate of its realisation was determined by the technical possibilities. The plan adopted aimed at the complete liquidation of the Jewish population.

Conform to the population census, ordered by the Germans, on October 28th, 1939, there were 359,827 Jews in Warsaw. All of them were condemned to die. As the place of their extermination the camp in Treblinka was set up, to which Jews were transported with railways. The distance between Warsaw, that is – the loading point, and Treblinka was 75 km. Deportation of so many people, even over such a relatively short distance, constituted for the Germans a serious logistic problem. Realisation of the program of extermination of the Jews from Warsaw took not quite three years. Presentation of its calendar shows in an ampler manner the character of this genocidal undertaking, aimed at the complete liquidation of the biggest concentration of Jews in Europe²⁵:

- April 1940 – construction of walls, surrounding the future ghetto, where all the Jews of Warsaw were to be concentrated, was started;
- 2 October 1940 – announcement of the order of establishment of the Jewish quarter in Warsaw;
- 20–25 October 1940 – approximately 115,000 Poles were resettled from the area of the ghetto, and approximately 140,000 Jews were moved to the ghetto;

²⁵ More detailed information on the course of liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto is provided in the book by Jagielski and Lec (1997).

- 15 November 1940 – closing of the ghetto; on 403 hectares roughly 350,000 Jews were concentrated; thus, density of population was close to 100,000 persons per 1 sq. km, and increased afterwards due to new transports brought in;
- January-March 1941 – resettlement to the ghetto of 50,000 Jews from the western part of the district of Warsaw;
- 15 October 1941 – announcement of the death penalty for Jews leaving the ghetto and for the persons, providing Jews with shelter;
- 1941 – during this year 43,000 of inhabitants of the ghetto die of hunger and exhaustion;
- March-July 1942 – resettlement to the ghetto of 40,000 Jews from the eastern part of the district of Warsaw;
- April 1942 – resettlement to the ghetto of 4,000 German Jews from Berlin, Hannover and Magdeburg;
- 22 July 1942 – announcement of the start of the so-called resettlement action to work in the East, in fact – transportation to the camp in Treblinka;
- 23 July – 12 August 1942 – deportation of 120,000 Warsaw Jews to Treblinka²⁶;
- 6–12 September 1942 – subsequent bigger deportation action; 54,000 Jews were transported to Treblinka, and 2,600 were killed on place;
- 21 September 1942 – establishment of the so-called residual ghetto, in which only 100,000 surviving Jews remained;
- 1942 – until the end of that year altogether close to 250,000 Jews were transported to Treblinka; during the same year approximately 100,000 inhabitants of the ghetto died of hunger and exhaustion;
- January 1943 – a new deportation action, involving several thousand Jews;
- 18 January 1943 – first armed confrontations in the streets of ghetto;
- 19 April 1943 – the outbreak of the ghetto uprising;
- 19 April – 8 May 1943 – fights in the streets of the ghetto, in which almost all of the Jewish insurgents get killed; Germans transport to Treblinka 56,065 captured Jews;
- 16 May 1943 – at the orders from General Jürgen Stroop, the Great Synagogue in Tłomackie street was blown up, as the evidence that the ghetto uprising had been liquidated, along with all the inhabitants of the ghetto²⁷.

Only approximately 1% of the overall population of the ghetto saved their lives. The saved Jews would hide on the Aryan side, mainly owing to the help from the Council for the Assistance to Jews “Żegota”, the underground organisation, subordinated to the resistance armed forces, the Home Army²⁸. Similar armed confrontations, like those in Warsaw, occurred also during the liquidation of the ghettos in Białystok, Będzin, Częstochowa and Vilna. The last large-scale

²⁶ On the very first day of this action the chairman of the *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) for the Warsaw ghetto, Adam Czerniaków, committed suicide.

²⁷ An account from Jürgen Stroop on the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto can be found in the known book by Moczarski (1995).

²⁸ After the liquidation of the ghettos some of the surviving Jewish fighters would join the Home Army and, for instance, in Warsaw, would fight against the Germans again in Warsaw Uprising in August and September 1944.

ghetto, still then in existence in Lodz, was liquidated upon a special order from Himmler in August 1944, and its last surviving inhabitants were sent to the gas chambers of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp²⁹.

German authorities, aware of the inevitable defeat in the war, and the approaching Soviet Army from the East, began the liquidation of the traces of the genocide. In such camps as Treblinka, Bełżec or Sobibór mass graves started to be emptied and the corpses were burned. This could not be fully carried out only in the camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where yet until 28 November 1944 extermination of Hungarian, Slovak and Greek Jews was taking place. The last episode of the Holocaust was the so-called “march of death” in January 1945, that is – the evacuation of the remaining prisoners to the West. During this evacuation thousand of prisoners died.

Over many years a controversy persisted as to the number of victims of the extermination camps. The figures, quoted just after the war, were very high. Thus, for instance, the official data concerning Oświęcim (Auschwitz-Birkenau) spoke of the number of victims equal around 4 million. The estimates put together later on were definitely lower, but there were also important differences between various estimates (see Table III.13).

Table III.13. Numbers of victims of the Nazi extermination camps according to A. Weiss, Cz. Madajczyk and R.Hilberg

Location of the camp	Estimates of the numbers of victims after:		
	Aharon Weiss	Czesław Madajczyk	Raul Hilberg
Bełżec	600,000	500,000–600,000	up to 600,000
Sobibór	250,000	150,000–250,000	up to 200,000
Treblinka	700,000–900,000	700,000–800,000	more than 750,000
Chełmno (Kulmhof)	152,000–310,000	260,000–300,000	up to 150,000
Auschwitz-Birkenau	1,200,000–2,500,000	2,500,000	more than 1,000,000
Majdanek	120,000–200,000	200,000	up to 50,000

Source: *Historia Polski w liczbach...* (1993, p. 193).

Owing to the recent studies of historians, the numbers referring to the victims of extermination camps were verified. These data were not very precise and usually overestimated. On the other hand, the numbers of people killed in mass executions and brought to death in labour camps were underestimated. It was not accounted for that on the territories of eastern Poland the majority of the Jewish population were killed in mass executions. They were only sporadically transported to the extermination camps located in General Governorship. The source report of J. Marszałek (1994) served to elaborate Table III.14 and Fig. III.7, showing the scales of the numbers of victims in the six extermination camps.

²⁹ With the last transport to the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau, on August 29th, 1944, the chairman of the Jewish council of the ghetto in Lodz, Chaim Rumkowski, was also deported.

Table III.14. Numbers of victims in the Nazi extermination camps according to J. Marszałek

Location of the camp	Total number of victims	Victims among Polish Jewry
Bełżec	500,000	490,000
Sobibór	150,000	60,000
Treblinka	850,000	800,000
Chełmno (Kulmhof)	150,000	150,000
Auschwitz-Birkenau	1,100,000	300,000
Majdanek	80,000	60,000
Totals	2,830,000	1,860,000

Source: Marszałek (1994, p. 40).

The most controversial issue was constituted by the actual number of victims of the KL Auschwitz (actually, the concentration camps Auschwitz I and Auschwitz-Birkenau II, including the killing facilities). French scholar Georges Welles, upon the analysis of the available documents, established that altogether 1,613,455 persons were brought to the camp (including 1,433,405 Jews and 146,605 prisoners of other nationalities, mostly Poles). Of those, 1,471,595 persons died and were killed (1,352,980 Jews and 86,675 representatives of other nationalities). These precise calculations were then verified by the Polish specialist F. Piper, who, upon this occasion, presented many other estimates, concerning the numbers of victims of KL Auschwitz. According to his own estimate, approximately 1.1 million people died in the camp, out of some 1.3 million brought there. The highest share among the victims was constituted by Jews – 960,000, followed by Poles – 74,000, Gypsies – 21,000, Soviet prisoners of war – 15,000, and prisoners of other nationalities – 12,000 (Piper, 1992, p. 93). The same author, in a later work, provided the data on the geographical origins of the Jewish victims of the KL Auschwitz. The highest number would come from Hungary – 430,000, then from Poland – 300,000, France – 69,000, The Netherlands – 60,000, Greece – 55,000, Bohemia and Moravia – 46,000, Slovakia – 25,000, Belgium – 25,000, Germany and Austria – 23,000, Yugoslavia – 10,000, Italy – 6,000, Latvia – 1,000, Lithuania – 817, and Norway – 690 persons. Besides, some 34,000 Jews were brought in from other concentration camps (Piper, 2009, p. 172).

Assuming that close to three million Polish Jews died during the years of occupation, we can conclude from the statistical data provided in Tables III.13 and III.14, related to the places of extermination, that approximately 62% of them died in the camps of Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Chełmno (Kulmhof), Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek. The other ones lost their lives in thousands of places of executions dispersed across the territory of Poland (Fig. III.8).

The perpetrators of the mass killings of the Jewish population were the so-called Operational Groups (*SS-Einsatzgruppen*) of the Nazi security police (*Sicherheitspolizei – Sipo*), organised by the Main Office of the Security of the Reich

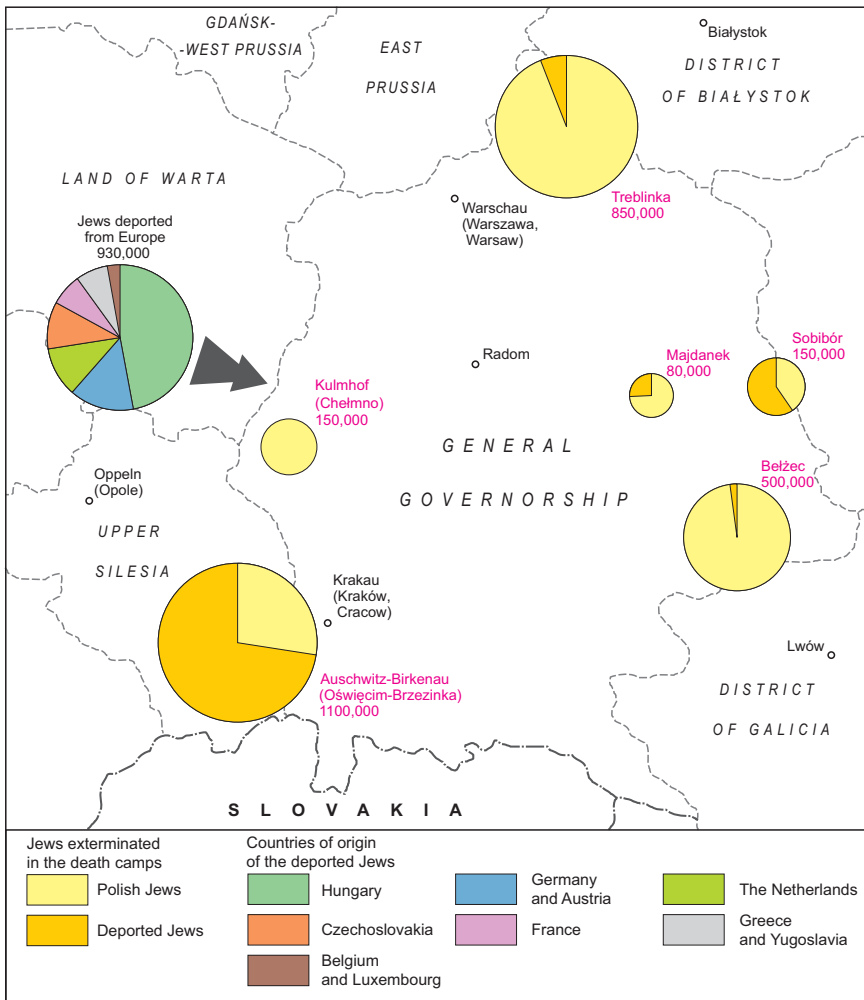


Fig. III.7. Extermination of Jewish population in the death camps during the Nazi occupation
 Source: own elaboration.

RSHA. During the preparations to the aggression against Poland, eight such Operational Groups were set up, meant to function within the framework of the so-called “Tannenberg” operation. These groups committed on the occupied Polish territories the first mass murders of the Jewish population. In connection with the planned attack against the USSR, at the beginning of 1941, establishment of subsequent Operational Groups was started, which were to be subordinated to the particular army groups of *Wehrmacht*. They were classified into the *Einsatzkommando* and *Sonderkommando*. Affiliated with the army group “North” *Einsatzgruppen* “A” was established, with the army group “Centre” – *Einsatzgruppen*

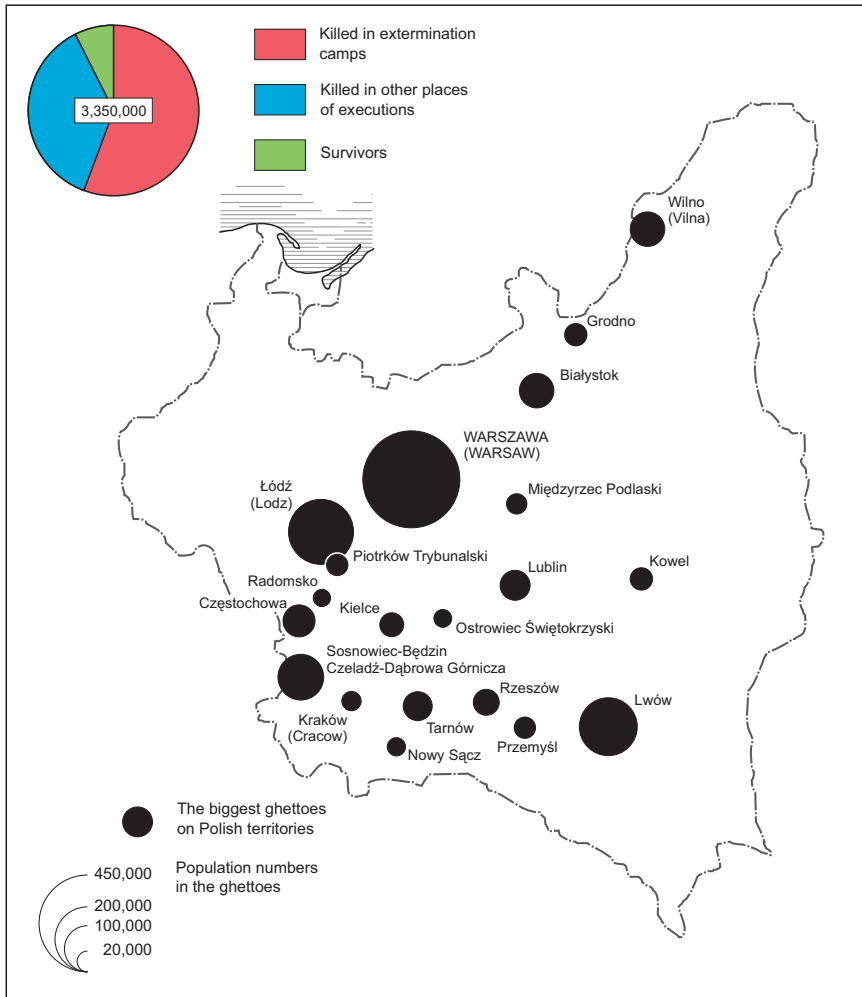


Fig. III.8. Estimation of the losses of Jewish population in the period of Nazi occupation

Source: own elaboration.

“B”, and with the army group “South” – *Einsatzgruppen* “C”. Additionally, *Einsatzgruppen* “D” was established in Crimea, operating within Ukraine and Bessarabia. Their basic task was the extermination of the Jewish population, as well as killing of the Soviet komissars and communist functionaries (Rhodes, 2002; Böhler et al., 2008).

As the German-Soviet front moved eastwards, the *Einsatzgruppen* would start the planned genocide on the occupied territories. In the first phase they entered the territory of the former Polish state, and then included the Baltic countries, Ukraine and Belarus in the program of their activity. It is most often assumed in

the literature of the subject that these formations killed altogether approximately 500,000 Jews (Böhler et al., 2008, p. 11). This rough estimate calls for a more precise determination, which is not an easy task. The biggest massacre took place in Bely Yar by Kiev, where during two days 34,000 Jews were shot. In eastern Poland the biggest mass execution took place in the town of Równe, where 15,000 Jews were killed. In smaller localities the technical problems were less serious, and so extermination would usually encompass all of Jews, living there. The scenario of the extermination actions was similar and featured extreme cruelty. Initially, Jewish population was gathered in the centre of the locality, and then they were escorted outside of the town, where they were shot to death in groups. The victims were often forced to dig pits, in which they were murdered.³⁰

Not only the detachments of the *Einsatzgruppen* were carrying out planned extermination activity. The Nazi authorities organised also special groups of the order-keeping police (*Ordnungspolizei – Orpo*), which were meant to carry out repression actions, mainly with respect to Jews, but also against the Polish population. Thus, for instance, on the basis of a book by an American author we can present the deeds of one battalion of this police formation, numbered 101 (Browning, 1992). At the beginning, this police unit was busy with deportation of the Polish population from the areas incorporated into the Third Reich, then they were entrusted with keeping order in the ghetto of Lodz, where they committed a lot of murderous deeds on the Jewish population. Upon a special order from Himmler, in June 1942 they were directed to the district of Lublin. In that time in the district of Lublin the action of extermination of Jews was started, under the cryptonym “Reinhard”. This action consisted, in particular, in transportation to the death camps in Bełżec, Sobibór and Majdanek of more than 100,000 Jews, inhabiting the localities, situated between the rivers Vistula and Bug. In addition, 65,000 Jews from the region of Galicia were also brought to these camps. Simultaneously, transports of Jews from Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Moravia, as well as Slovakia, were coming in.

Battalion 101, mentioned already, started the extermination expedition from the locality of Józefów, where on July 13th, 1942, 1,500 Jews were shot, then in Łomazy, on July 17th, 1942 – 1,700 Jews, and on 25th-26th of August 1942 in Międzyrzec Podlaski – 960 Jews. Similar mass killings were taking place in other localities, as well. The subsequent analogous actions brought even more victims, since in the camp in Majdanek the battalion shot dead 16,500 persons, and in Poniatowa – 14,000 persons (Mańkowski, 2008, pp. 210–214).

Extermination actions of similar character were carried out by other detachments of German police. They were performed not only in the district of Lublin,

³⁰ The bestiality and sadism of the perpetrators can be illustrated by the following account: “Victims were transported with lorries to the forest, where long, shallow ditches awaited them. Terrible scenes took place. Years afterwards the executioners would avow that despite the alcohol that they had drunk and the periodical shifts at the posts of direct execution, they were shocked, ‘spattered with blood and brains’, many of them missed their shots, and the victims were successively covered with new bodies, in order to then cover them all with soil. Execution ended only at dusk, around 9 p.m. In the most cruel manner 1,500 Jews were murdered: babies, women, children, old people” (Mańkowski, 2008, p. 211).

but also in other districts of the General Governorship, in the region of Białystok, and, first of all, in the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian areas. In regions more distant from the extermination camps Jews were being killed on place. Thus, for instance, the majority of Jews from Vilna, Brest', Grodno, Minsk, Wilejka, Pinsk or Lida were executed in the vicinities of their home towns.

As mentioned already, at the same time, Jews from many European countries were transported to the area of occupied Poland. They were killed in the gas chambers of the extermination camps. It is estimated that more than one million Jews originating from outside of the Polish boundaries as of 1938 were killed on the territory contained within these boundaries. According to Cz. Łuczak (1993, p. 135) only from ten European countries close to 930,000 Jews were transported to Poland and killed here (Table III.15).

Table III.15. Numbers of Jewish population deported to occupied Poland

Country of origin	Number of Jews transported
Hungary	437,000
The Netherlands	105,000
Germany	100,500
Czechoslovakia	88,000
France	70,000
Greece	50,000
Austria	40,000
Belgium	25,000
Yugoslavia	12,000
Luxembourg	2,000
Total	930,000

Source: Łuczak (1993, p. 136).

The statistical data provided before, though, are not complete. In reality the numbers of Jews deported from Austria, Yugoslavia, and especially from Hungary, were much higher. We can refer here to the data quoted by Cz. Madajczyk, in his report, namely that some 200,000 Jews were deported from Austria and Germany together, 71,000 from Yugoslavia, and 75,000 from Greece (Madajczyk, 1986, p. 28). They were mainly directed to Poland. Virtually all Jews brought from other countries died, since they did not know Polish language nor the situation of the occupied country and thus were not capable of enduring till the defeat of the German army. The documentation available suggests that during the years of the Nazi occupation more than four million Jews died on the former territories of Poland. During this period they were subject to forced movements, even several times over. This was simply related to definite technical and logistic conditions. The ultimate goal was already set firm by the Nazi authorities, and

the activities carried out aimed consistently at the final solution of the Jewish “question”, that is – the complete extermination of Jews (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*)³¹.

III.7. The *Generalplan Ost* and its implementation in the region of Zamość

The authorities of the Nazi Germany intended, after the complete extermination of Jews, and after the victorious war, to carry out a partial extermination, and the relocation, of the Slavonic population (mainly Poles). The place of the relocated population was to be taken over by Germans. Vast areas of Eastern Europe were meant to be Germanised³². These plans were associated with the concept of the so-called *Lebensraum* (living space), that is – conquering for the needs of Germany of not quite well defined, but extensive territories situated in the eastern part of the European continent.³³ This concept was linked with the famous slogan of *Drang nach Osten* (Drive to the East), appealing for the expansion in the eastern direction. Removal (*Verdrängung*) and destruction (*Vernichtung*) of the Slavs were the necessary conditions for gaining of the *Lebensraum*. For purposes of making this program more concrete, conceptual studies were started. The most known and extreme plan was called General Plan for the East (*Generalplan Ost*). Work on this plan was carried out in the years of World War II. German defeat brought the complete failure of these genocidal intentions. Yet, during the years of war, the Nazis succeeded to test in practice, in an experimental

³¹ The program of extermination of Jews, adopted during the Wannsee conference, was in principle implemented. Conform to the data, contained in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (vol. 36, p. 495) altogether 4,565,000 Jews died on the territories of Poland and the USSR. In view of the instability of the administrative boundaries, the respective authors were not capable to discriminate between the victims in the two countries. In the framework of the Holocaust 125,000 Jews from Germany were killed, 277,000 from Czechoslovakia (within the boundaries from before the Munich dictate), 402,000 from Hungary and northern Transylvania, 83,000 from France, 24,000 from Belgium, 700 from Luxembourg, 7,500 from Italy, 106,000 from The Netherlands, 800 from Norway, 40,000 from Romania, 60,000 from Yugoslavia, and 65,000 from Greece. The total magnitude of losses was, therefore, estimated at 5,756,000. This rough estimation implies that more than half of the victims of the Holocaust were constituted by Polish Jews. An almost identical number of exterminated Jews is given by Gilbert (1998, p. 249), namely 5,750,000. A distinctly lower estimate is provided in the well known report by Hilberg (1985, p. 1219), according to whom the number of victims of the Holocaust in Europe was approximately 5,100,000.

³² Himmler repeatedly announced that after the Jewish population, the turn of extermination of the Polish population should come. During the meeting of commanders of the Nazi camps, located in Poland, which took place in Poznań on 15 March 1940, he proclaimed that “All Polish specialists shall be made use of in our arms industry. Thereafter all Poles shall disappear from this world. It is a necessity that the German nation should consider the extermination of all Poles to be its main task” (Łuczak, 1989, p. 18).

³³ More on the concept of *Lebensraum* in the paper by the author (Eberhardt, 2008). The German-language bibliography of the subject is provided in the work of Wasser (1993).

form, on a small area, the possibility of realising the resettlement program. The area around Zamość, a town situated in the southern part of the region of Lublin, was selected for this purpose. It can be expected that in the case of Hitler's victory, the program, implemented in the area of Zamość, would be carried out not only in Poland, but also on other areas, inhabited by Slavs. That is why it is of interest and importance to present the main idea of the General Plan for the East, and the concepts that its designers had in mind, since a similar fate would have awaited other areas, occupied by the Nazi forces, and in the further perspective – incorporated to the Third Reich.

The work on the General Plan for the East started at the instructions from Himmler in June 1941, and its initial results in the form of a memorandum were ready in July 1941. This was a strictly confidential material, meant for a small group of leaders of the Third Reich. In the period of military successes at the eastern front the plan was becoming increasingly radical. It envisaged the resettlement from Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and partly from the areas over Baltic, of 31 million inhabitants, who would have been moved to western Siberia.³⁴ It was planned, at the same time, that the process of Germanisation would encompass 14 million persons, fulfilling the racial criteria. The place of the resettled was to be taken by the colons, coming from the German core areas.

The first version of the program of *Generalplan Ost* was verified at the order of Himmler's and on 27 April 1942 a new memorandum was prepared, entitled "On the issue of the General Plan for the East". This document, following further changes, took the name of "Preparation of people needed for the Germanising of the new settlement areas in the East". This document defined the scale and the agenda of the settlement actions.³⁵ According to the documents elaborated the intention was to Germanise the following provinces: Gdańsk-West Prussia, Poznań, Upper Silesia, General Gouvernement, the Baltic states, Belarus, and partly Ukraine. During the thirty post-war years 8 million Germans would have been settled there. There were differences as to the scale of resettlement of the Slavonic population (31 million or 45 million).

On the basis of these reports, on May 16th, 1942, another document was sent to Himmler, constituting the essential conceptual program of the *Generalplan Ost*. The plan was ultimately divided up into two stages. In the first, short-term one, the directives for the immediate future were formulated. In the long-term plan, covering 25–30 years, the plan was to resettle from roughly 700,000 sq. km between 46 and 52 million of inhabitants of these areas.

The approved implementation plans of the *Generalplan Ost* were presented by Himmler in his pronouncement on September 1942 in Żytomierz. The former Polish voivodships, incorporated into the Reich, along with the General Governorship and parts of the Baltic countries, Belarus and Ukraine, were expect-

³⁴ In the atlas authored by the German geographer Hilgemann (1984, p. 114) the number of the resettled was estimated at 38.4 million, of whom from Ukraine 21 million, from Poland – 10 million, and 3.7 million from Bohemia and Belarus alike.

³⁵ These documents, not known until quite recently, were translated into Polish and published, along with respective comments, in the book by Maćior-Majka (2007).

ed to be Germanised over twenty years. During the consecutive meetings of the team, elaborating the program, on February 1st and 2nd, 1943, concrete implementation tasks were adopted. The intention was to remove 6–7 million of people from the Polish territories, incorporated into the Reich, 10 million from the General Governorship, 3 million from the Baltic countries, 6–7 million from Galicia and western Ukraine, and 5–6 million from Belarus. The plan envisaged removal of Jews in 100% (this goal, by that time, having been almost entirely accomplished), of Poles in 80–85%, of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians in 50%, of Belarusians in 75%, and of Ukrainians in 65% (Maçior-Majka, 2007, p. 203). Realisation of these plans required time, but, first of all – it required winning of the on-going war.

The district of Lublin, yet before the Himmler's decision of the establishing in its south-eastern part, around Zamość, a model region, inhabited by the German colons, had been since the beginning of war the object of interest of the highest Nazi authorities. The question was, namely, considered, whether there is a possibility of deporting Jews to the southern part of the district. This issue has not got, in its entirety, a clearly unanimous interpretation in the literature of the subject. That is why it cannot be stated whether the author of this concept was Himmler or perhaps Hitler himself. This, however, is of secondary importance, but definitely the concept as such was being analysed at the turn of the year 1940 in the closest circle around Hitler. The subject of consideration was constituted by the possibility of concentration of the dispersed, until then, Jews in one concrete place. This would have provided the opportunity for the resolution in an arbitrary manner of the Jewish question, and in a short period of time would bring the end to the European Jewish dispersed community. Finally, the area was chosen located on the eastern side of the river Vistula and the northern side of the river San, close to the then boundary with the USSR (Eisenbach, 1953, pp. 123–124).

The possibility was considered of resettling to this eastern area of the General Governorship around five million Polish, German, Austrian, Czech and Slovak Jews. Various ways of realisation of this technically complicated deportation action were taken into account. According to one of the variants, Polish population was to be completely expelled from this area and a purely Jewish "reserve" was to be established. This idea, though, was ultimately abandoned in April 1940, and the fact of resignation was communicated to the governor of the Lublin district, E. Zörner, by the general of SS and police, W. Krüger. It can be supposed that such an idea had been little realistic from the very start. Concentration of several million Jews on a limited agricultural area, featuring low degree of urbanisation, could have brought about hard to imagine technical and economic perturbations. Another concept therefore arose, similarly little realistic, of expediting the European Jews to the former French colonies in Africa. This idea, though, was quickly rejected, since it simply could not be realised in the existing situation. In such circumstances the concept of total extermination of Jewish population was chosen. Such a solution, anyway, seems to have been most appropriate for the crime-infected mentalities of Hitler and Himmler (Friedman, 1973).

The district of Lublin continued to be perceived by the German administration as most fit for the colonisation experiments (Musiał, 1999). After the decision

was taken of deporting Poles from the areas incorporated to the Reich, the region of Lublin was indicated, in particular, as the location of destination. First transports came in already in October 1939. They brought Poles from Gdynia, Gdańsk and Poznań. Until the end of 1939 approximately 15,000 Poles were transported there. The action was continued over the entire year 1940. Between January and August 1940 altogether 90 railway transports came to the district of Lublin, with 69,953 deported Poles. They originated from the Land of Warta and from Pomerania. The deported were initially put in the camp, which had been established in Chełm, and then they were dispersed over the entire district of Lublin (Kielboń, 1995, p. 29).

In connection with the establishment of three extermination camps in the district of Lublin (Majdanek, Sobibór, Bełżec), transports of Jews started to come to these camps. According to the available estimates, altogether approximately 650,000 Jews were transported and subject to extermination in the camps. On the other hand, roughly 55,000 Jews were transported from the district to other concentration camps. The forced resettlements of the Polish population had a smaller scale, since between 1939 and 1944 altogether 225,000 persons of Polish nationality were deported, while 180,000 were brought in (Kielboń, 1995, p. 180). Within the framework of the district of Lublin movements of Polish and Ukrainian population did also take place. This happened mainly in the zone of the river Bug and in the eastern part of the area of Zamość.

The authorities of the Nazi Germany decided to carry out, in terms of an experiment, in the course of the current activities, on a certain limited area, an attempt of Germanising through the deportation of the local population. The choice was made of the region of Zamość. This choice was not incidental and resulted from definite geographical reasons. The area of Zamość had ethnically Polish character, but on its eastern fringe the Ukrainian minority appeared, and across Bug river, to the East, this population dominated absolutely. Establishment of an area, inhabited by Germans would separate Ukrainian population from the Polish one, and close from the East the territory of General Governorship, meant for Germanising in a later period. An additional prerequisite was constituted by good soils, which ensured the possibility of creating highly productive farms.

The decision of the resettlement of the Polish population from the area of Zamość was taken personally by Himmler, who supervised the respective activities from the beginning to the end. He treated the action as the so-called *Kleine Planung* (Little Planning), an experimental groundwork before attempting the full-fledged realisation of the *Generalplan Ost*. The responsibility for the success of the action was with the commander of SS and police in the district of Lublin, Odilo Globocnik.

The deportation action started on 28 November 1942 with the village of Skierbieszów³⁶, to then encompass the neighbouring areas. Until March 1943 approximately 50,000 Poles were deported from 126 villages. In the second phase of the

³⁶ After the Poles were deported, Germans were settled in this village. On 22 February 1943, Horst Köhler, the future president of Germany, was born there to a family of Bessarabian Germans.

action (under the cryptonym *Wehrwolf*), which lasted between June and August 1943, further 60,000 Poles were driven out of 171 villages, situated in the vicinity of Zamość³⁷. Altogether, the resettlement affected 110,000 persons from 297 villages, in that number 39,725 persons from the county of Biłgoraj, 10,918 from the county of Hrubieszów, 30,830 from the county of Tomaszów Lubelski, and 40,037 from the county of Zamość. In the framework of this resettlement action 11,612 Poles were killed (Kielboń, 1995, p. 43). This deportation action was carried out in an extremely cruel manner and had, in fact, the character of pacification. People were given 20 minutes for evacuation. The resisting persons were shot dead on place. The deported were placed in the transitory camps and classified into the following categories:

- persons with Nordic racial aspects were destined for Germanising,
- persons capable of working were transported to the Reich,
- persons considered dangerous were directed to immediate extermination,
- other persons, incapable of working, were directed to concentration camps.

Besides, well over ten thousand children were taken in a brutal manner from their parents. After selection, approximately 5,000, fulfilling the racial criteria, were separated. They were brought to Germany for the purpose of Germanising them. After the war only some 800 of those returned to their families.

The villages, emptied of their Polish inhabitants, were settled by Germans, mainly from Eastern Europe, and partly Ukrainians. As the action progressed, the resistance of the local population intensified. Young people would join the guerrilla detachments, which were becoming larger and better organised. A counter-action started, which could not be effectively stopped by the Germans, especially as they started to lose on the eastern front of war. In revenge, Polish detachments would attack the villages now inhabited by the German and Ukrainian settlers. These, in turn, in panic, would abandon the villages and escape to the nearby towns, in which German military garrisons were located. German authorities have been gradually losing control over the area in question. The punitive expeditions would bring only short-lived effects. Total destabilisation followed. The action, undertaken by Himmler as the introduction to the realisation of the General Plan for the East, was at the end of 1943 ultimately interrupted. The German authorities of the General Govenorship became aware of the complete failure of the action, actually – a political and military catastrophe.

Against the background of the entire scale of resettlements and the dimensions of cruelty of the respective events during the World War II, the action in the area of Zamość had a local character. It encompassed altogether only 120,000 persons, of whom more than ten thousand were killed, and all lost, temporarily, their homes. Yet, the significance of this action is much bigger than just the scale in numbers. It was undertaken as the forerunner for the far-reaching genocidal plans, which were to change the demographic and ethnic image of the entire Eastern Europe. It was intended to constitute the beginning of what was

³⁷ The German action in the area of Zamość is well known and described in detail in the Polish literature of the subject. Owing to the book by Mentzel (1997) information on these events reached also the German audience.

to happen to tens of millions of Slavs, classified by the aggressors in the lower racial category. This action is a very telling illustration of the unavoidable consequences of the potential implementation of the *Generalplan Ost* for the nations of Eastern Europe.

III.8. Resettlements of population within the General Governorship

The political-territorial unit, which was given the name of General Gouvernement, or, in plain speak, General Governorship, encompassed the central part of Poland. It was subdivided into four districts: Cracow, Warsaw, Radom and Lublin. Hans Frank was nominated the governor by Hitler, and the seat of the governor was Cracow. At a special conference, with participation of Hitler, which took place on October 12th, 1939, the outline for the German policy with respect to this occupied part of Poland was defined. The following binding decisions were taken: "Poland shall be given a limited autonomy. It will neither be a part of the German Reich, nor an administrative district of the Reich³⁸ (...) The task of the administration is not to turn Poland into a model voivodship or a model land of German order, nor to economically or financially rectify the situation of this country. It should be made impossible for Polish intelligentsia to play the leading role. On the territory of Poland low living standard ought to be maintained. We wish to only gain the labour force from there. In the administering of the country the help from the side of Poles can also be used. No national units, though, can be established. (...) Any beginnings of the consolidation of relations in Poland must be liquidated. (...) The administrative authorities of this country should also enable the cleansing of the territory of the Reich of Jews and Polacks. For purposes of resettlements, cooperation ought to be maintained with other regions of the Reich." (Schenk, 2009, pp. 144–145).

This quite primitively formulated text, similarly as other documents of this type, imply that the General Governorship was meant to be a transitory form, while the Polish population, inhabiting this territory, was to be exploited as long as it continues to be needed by the German economy and later on removed. In the future it would have constituted a part of the Third Reich with the popu-

³⁸ According to the then applied legal precepts, which were elaborated by A. Weh, then the head of the Law-Making Department in the administration of the General Governorship, conform, anyway, to the directives of Hitler and Frank, it was decided that "occupation in the General Gouvernement is a permanent occupation with the intention of incorporation (occupation *animus domini*), which ought not to be put on a par with the occupation of Norway or The Netherlands, and the Hague Law does not find application in Poland, since the disintegration of the state took place, and all the expressions of sovereignty of this entity originate in this or another manner from the German Reich. In this sense the General Gouvernement is not a successor to the Polish state, but a component part of the Great German empire" (Mańkowski, 2008, p. 97).

lation of German nationality. Jews from this territory were to be exterminated, while Poles – partly deported and partly Germanised. Another important task was to provide manpower for the German Reich. All these plans were to be realised with the use of repression, terror and total exploitation of the local economic resources. The attitude towards the particular nationalities was in general terms defined. Some were meant for extermination, others for resettlement.

Side by side with the Jewish population the Nazi authorities decided to exterminate on the territory of the General Governorship for racial reasons one more population group, namely Gypsies. In view of their dispersion across space it was decided to concentrate them in selected points and then to transport them to the death camps.

This program was not so consistently carried out as this was the case with the Jewish population. Yet, more than a dozen thousand Polish Gypsies were brought to the death camps, where they were killed. A similar fate was prepared for several tens of thousands of Gypsies from other European countries. The first group consisted of the Gypsies from Germany and Austria, 6,000 persons, brought in November 1941. They died in the ghetto of Lodz and in the death camp of Chełmno. The consecutive transports of Gypsies came from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and other European countries. They were brought to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, where they were killed in the gas chambers. Besides, a part of Gypsies were killed in mass executions. It was only at the very end of war that the Nazi authorities renounced the plan of complete extermination of the Gypsy population. The pressure on two satellite countries, Hungary and Romania, in which the Gypsy population mainly concentrated, ceased. This allowed a large part of the Gypsies, living in south-eastern Europe survive until the end of war.

During the first phase of the Soviet-German war, some four million Soviet POWs were taken by the Germans. A vast majority of them died and were killed. A large part of them was transported to Poland, or across the Polish territories to the Reich. On the territory of the General Governorship, and partly on the areas incorporated into the Reich the Nazi authorities organised several dozen temporary camps, where the Soviet POWs were brought to. The camps often did not have even simple barracks. The POWs were kept in inhuman conditions. They were not supplied with food, and frequently even were not given water. Most of them died. On the basis of the study of E. Kozłowski (1983), who conducted in-depth investigations into this question, we can determine in an approximate manner the scale of extermination of the Soviet POWs on the occupied Polish territories (Fig. III.9, Table III.16).

The here presented data concerning the numbers of exterminated Soviet POWs are incomplete. They do not include the POW camps and the places of extermination, located within the eastern lands of the Commonwealth. Numerous POWs died outside of the camps, during conveying, evacuation or work. Not many survived. Yet, it is estimated that around 20 thousand Soviet POWs made it out of the camps. Some of the flights had a mass character. Thus, for instance, the Soviet POWs, put in the camp in Suchożebry – some 70,000 persons – on September 3rd, 1941, started at a given sign to destroy the barbed wire fence. Many of them died, but around 10–12 thousand prisoners escaped from the camp (Łuczak,

1993, p. 137). They made their way to the neighbouring forests. Polish population helped them a lot. Later on they strengthened the resistance troops.

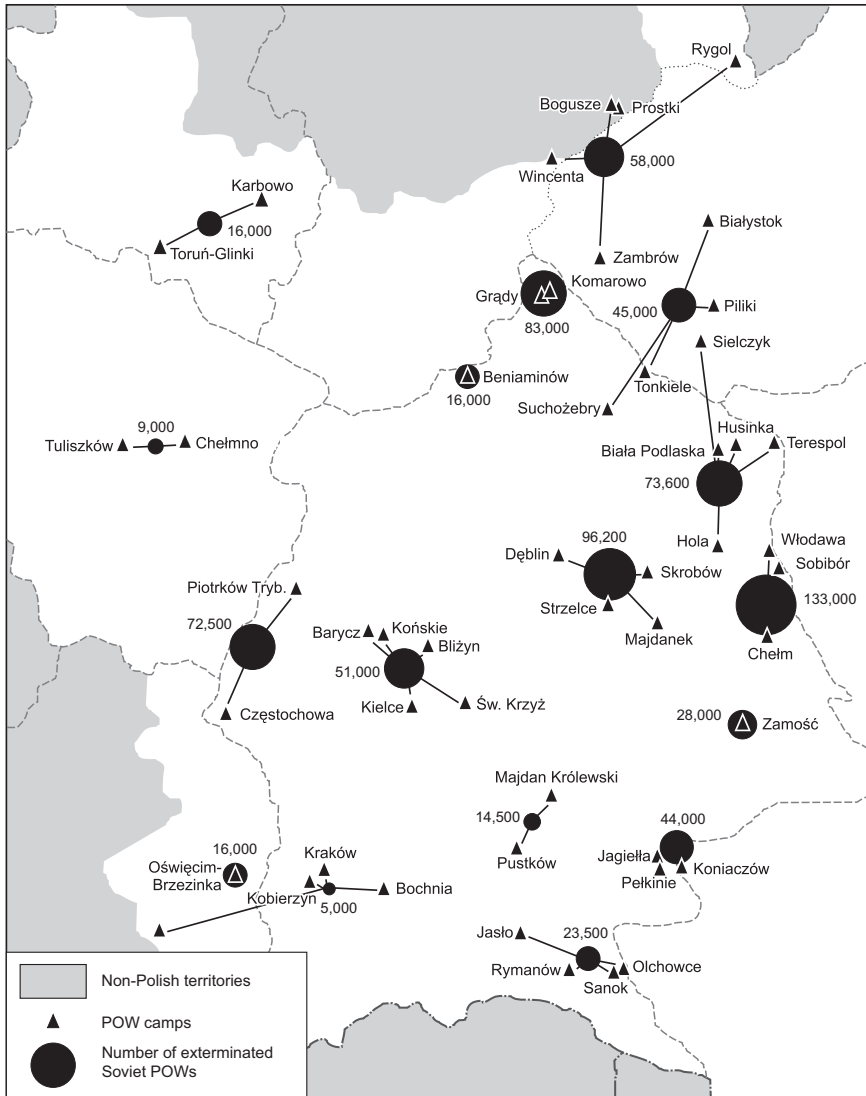


Fig. III.9. Extermination of the Soviet POWs in the camps during Nazi occupation

Source: own elaboration.

Likewise, numerous POWs from other armies, taking part in the World War II, were also brought into the territory of Poland. Tragic was the fate of the Italian soldiers, who stationed in some Polish localities. After the capitulation of Italy in September 1943 they were interned by the Germans and deported to the camps

distributed over the Polish territories. According to the estimates, some 22,000 Italian prisoners of war died on the Polish territory in the years 1943–1944.

Table III.16. Numbers of Soviet POWs having died on the occupied Polish territories

Camp designation	Localities	Number of victims
Stalag 307 and 366	Biała Podlaska, Hola, Sielczyk, Husinka, Terespol	73,600
Stalag 376	Białystok, Tonkiele, Piliki, Suchożebry	45,000
Stalag I F, 68	Bogusze, Prostki, Wincenta, Zambrów, Rygol	58,000
Stalag IV D	Beniaminów	16,000
Stalag 319	Chełm Lubelski, Włodawa, Sobibór	133,000
Stalag 324 and 333	Grądy, Komorowo	83,000
?	Dęblin, Strzelce, Skrobów, Majdanek	96,200
Stalag 325	Zamość	28,000
?	Kielce, Bliżyn, Święty Krzyż, Barycz, Końskie	51,000
Stalag 367	Częstochowa, Piotrków Trybunalski	72,500
?	Chełmno, Tuliszków, Komorów	9,000
Stalag 369	Kobierzyn, Cieszyn, Kraków, Bochnia	5,000
?	Sanok, Olchowce, Rymanów, Jasło	23,500
Stalag 315 and 317	Koniaczów, Pełkinie, Jagiełła	44,000
?	Majdan Królewski, Pustków	14,500
Concentration camp	Auschwitz-Birkenau	16,000
Stalag XX C	Toruń Glinki, Karbowo	16,000
Total		784,300

Source: Kozłowski, (1983, p. 12).

Besides, more than a dozen thousand allied POWs of various nationalities were brought to the camps situated in Poland. It can be stated on the basis of rough estimates (not considering the population of Jewish extraction) that around one million citizens of other countries (mainly POWs) were brought during the years of war by the Germans to the territory of the General Governorship alone. They were treated in a very differentiated manner. Many of them did not survive the war.

The inhabitants of the General Governorship of Polish nationality were subject to repression, forced deportations and terror during the entire period of war³⁹.

³⁹ The scale of repression may best be illustrated by the interview with the General Governor Hans Frank, which appeared on February 12th, 1940, in the newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*. Answering the question, concerning the difference between, on the one hand, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and, on the other, the General Governorship, Frank said with outright cynicism: "Let me express this through the following picture. In Prague, for instance, big red posters were put out announcing that on that very day seven Czechs were shot. I thought to myself: if I wanted to put a single poster informing of every seven Poles executed, it would not suffice the forests of entire Poland to print those posters" (Schenk, 2009, p. 154).

The very first action against the civilian rural population in the General Governorship was undertaken in the spring of 1940 in the region of Kielce in the course of chase against the guerrilla detachment of “Hubal” (Major Henryk Dobrzański). The *Wehrmacht* troops, provoked by him, burned down a dozen villages, shot several hundred people, arrested and displaced many. The subsequent two years were relatively calm with this respect. The military activities of the Polish underground took on a truly large scale in the years 1943–1944. They encompassed the entire territory of the General Governorship, a large part of the Polish eastern lands, as well as some areas incorporated into the Reich. In response, the repression directed against civil population unleashed. During the pacification actions aimed at the bases of the guerrilla troops several hundred villages were destroyed in the General Governorship alone, their population exterminated or deported.

The relocation of the population of Warsaw after the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising took also on a very large scale. According to rough estimates, the left-bank, main part of Warsaw had on the day the uprising broke out, August 1st, 1944, between 800,000 and 900,000 inhabitants. The direct losses among the civilian population during the fighting amounted, conform to the approximate estimates, to 160,000 people. They were killed in mass executions (in the quarters of Wola and Ochota),⁴⁰ due to air raids, and in the direct fighting. The losses of the resistance forces in terms of the dead were 18,000, with 15,000 wounded having been captured by the Germans. The intensity of the pacification activities of the *Wehrmacht* and the SS detachments with respect to the inhabitants of Warsaw during the Uprising changed with time. During the first month of the Uprising (August 1944) mass executions of the civilians and the Polish Home Army military were taking place quite regularly. Later on, in the middle of September, this bestiality somewhat subsided. Under the pressure from the Western Allies the Germans recognised the fighters from the Home Army to be regular Polish soldiers (and not “bandits” to be executed on place), and virtually ceased to execute the civilians. This provided the possibility for conducting the negotiations, concerning the conditions of capitulation of the Uprising (Krannhals, 1964). Polish side, without any effective assistance from the Allies, became aware of the hopelessness of continuation of the fights in the streets of the city. In the context of the changing attitudes, the losses among the civilians in the quarters that capitulated later on, at the turn of October (the Centre, Żoliborz, Mokotów) were significantly lower. After having put down the Uprising, the German authorities decided to remove the remaining population from the left-bank Warsaw and from a dozen localities, adjacent to the town. Those driven out of town were directed to the transitory camp in Pruszków, established on the area of railway workshops⁴¹. Between 5,000 and 45,000 persons would stay in this transitory camp

⁴⁰ In the first days of the Uprising the SS troops, commanded by the Oberführer SS Oskar Dirlwanger, Gruppenführer SS Heinz Rheinefarth and Brigadenführer Bronislaw Vladislavovich Kaminski, in which, side by side with Germans, there were also many former citizens of the USSR, murdered around 40,000 civilians in the Warsaw quarters of Wola and Ochota.

⁴¹ The present author was also among those driven out of the city. At the age of 8 years, together with parents and two sisters (of 14 years and 2 months) we were forced to march out

daily. The average stay in the camp lasted a couple of days, and during this period selection was performed. Those incapable of working were transported to various towns of the General Governorship, where they were set free, without any means for living. Their situation in the country, destroyed completely by war, was extremely difficult. They survived owing to the assistance from the local population, who also suffered from war-induced poverty.

Those capable of working were transported to forced labour in the Reich. They were directed to the transitory camps in Nürnberg, Breslau, Gröningen, the surroundings of Hamburg and Stuttgart, as well as to Bavaria, Austria, Thüringen, Brandenburg, and to Pomerania. The participants of the Uprising and the young people, suspect of the active participation in the fighting, were directed to the POW camps and to the concentration camps: Dachau, Gross-Rosen, Mauthausen, Auschwitz, Stutthof, Sachsenhausen (Gawryszewski, 2005, pp. 488–489).

The estimates, concerning the number of persons relocated in connection with these events, differ significantly. Usually, a number close to 500,000 persons is given. Most probably this is an underestimation, and the information of roughly 650,000 relocated persons is more realistic. The issue has not found an ultimate resolution until now. The question is difficult, since not all inhabitants, leaving the city, passed through the camp in Pruszków. Further, registration carried out by the German authorities was not too precise, since the relocation was taking place during heavy street fighting. That is also why the German estimates are much lower and oscillate around 350,000 (Table III.17).

Table III.17. Deportation of the population from Warsaw to the transitional camp in Pruszków

Groups of people	According to the International Red Cross report	According to German sources	According to the Delegation of the Polish Government in Exile to Poland
The relocated: total	238,200	347,524	650,000
– from Warsaw	–	–	550,000
– from the vicinity of Warsaw	–	–	100,000
Transported from the camp:			
– to work in Third Reich	128,400		165,000
– for settling in General Governorship	109,800	153,810	235,000
– to concentration camps	–	167,752	65,000
Released as sick and liberated illegally	–	25,962	100,000

Source: Gawryszewski (2005, p. 489).

of the quarter of Żoliborz to Pruszków on September 30th, 1944. After having stayed for three days in the camp, owing to the bribe paid to the German guards, the entire family could leave the camp and start the end-of-war wandering, typical for many Polish families at that time.

In the middle of October 1944 Germans finished the relocation of population from the left-bank Warsaw. The ruined city became completely empty. Around a dozen thousand people remained within the fringe areas of the town. Technical infrastructure was dismantled and all kinds of material and cultural goods were transported to the Reich. Organised transports would carry away everything that represented any kind of utilitarian value. The first inhabitants of the city could return to the ruins only after 17 January 1945, that is – after the Soviet and associated Polish army marched into Warsaw.

The scale of the demographic losses borne by Warsaw in the period of the World War II, resulting from the policy of extermination, terror and resettlements, can be demonstrated with the statistical data on the population balance between 1 September 1939 and 8 May 1945. The number of inhabitants of Warsaw on the day the war started was 1,300,000. Of those, 685,000 have not survived the war. The losses of the Jewish population, due to the Holocaust, were approximately 350,000 – i.e. close to 99% of all Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw. Thus, the losses of the Polish population were at around 325,000 (roughly 1/3 of the pre-war number). So, some 615,000 inhabitants of Warsaw survived war. They were almost exclusively Poles. The losses of the Polish population, which were also very acute, were more evenly distributed in time. During the siege of Warsaw in September 1939 some 20,000 Poles died. Executions, repressions and terror during the years of occupation brought the death of roughly 32,000 persons. As mentioned already before, around 180,000 died during the Warsaw Uprising. It is estimated that in the concentration camps, in relocation and in force labour in the Reich 97,000 inhabitants of the capital of Poland died. Many of the Polish inhabitants were effectively relocated from the city and dispersed across the territory of the General Governorship and Germany. The number of inhabitants of the entire city on the day the war ended – 8 May 1945 – was merely at 366,000 (Gawryszewski, 2005, pp. 86–88).

Extermination of the Jewish and Polish population, as well as mass deportation actions had an enormous impact on the demographic situation of the General Governorship. Political conditions were so unstable that any kind of analysis, concerning this important question, may give rise to essential substantive, as well as statistical doubts and reservations. Even the German administration, formally in full control of the territory, did not have adequate information as to the numbers and distribution of the population. They would only make rough estimates. According to such official data the population number in the General Governorship in December 1939 was 11,380,000, while in December 1940 – 12,102,000. The increase of the number resulted not so much from the marginal natural increase, as from the positive migration balance. During this period, namely, Polish population, relocated from the territories, incorporated to the Third Reich, came to the General Governorship.

In the subsequent period a constant demographic regress took place. Mass extermination of Jews started, as well as intensified terror with respect to the Polish population. During the next two years the population number dropped by 1,456,000 (see Table III.18).

Table III.18. Ethnic structure of the population of General Governorship in the years 1940–1942*

Nationality	As of December 1940		As of December 1942	
	number	in %	number	in %
Poles	10,084,000	83.3	9,464,000	88.9
Germans	111,000	0.9	264,000	2.5
Jews	1,347,000	11.2	115,000	1.1
Ukrainians and Belarusians	530,000	4.4	716,000	6.7
Other	30,000	0.2	87,000	0.8
Totals	12,102,000	100.0	10,646,000	100.0

* without the District of Galicia, which was incorporated into the General Governorship on 1 August 1941.

Source: Madajczyk (1970, p. 241).

The statistical data here presented indicate clearly the rate of the extermination of the Jewish population, carried out by Germans. In just two years, on the analysed part of Polish territories, the number of Jews decreased by 1,232,000, to roughly 10% of the initial number. The still alive Jews awaited extermination in the ghettos of Warsaw and Lodz. The Jewish population of the medium and small towns had been in a vast majority already killed.

In the effect of repressions the number of Poles decreased by 520,000. Due to the inflow of the employees of the Nazi administration the number of Germans increased. Yet, they constituted only 2.5% of the total population number. The increase of the Ukrainian population was largely an apparent phenomenon. During the period of the occupation Ukrainians were preferred by the German authorities. In the eastern part of the General Governorship Ukrainian administration officers were employed in local offices, since the German authorities trusted them more than Poles. This, in turn, had a deforming influence on the results of the demographic estimations, carried out by the German authorities. Conform to the last such estimate, of 22 May 1944, population number in the General Governorship was 10,250,000. This was shortly before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, which brought demographic losses of at least 180,000 persons, followed by the passage of the German-Soviet front, also entailing heavy losses, which ultimately terminated the existence of the political entity called General Gouvernement.

In the years 1943–44 the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in the region of Volhynia developed, which thereafter spilled out into the region of Podole. It was incited by the Ukrainian nationalist groups, which aimed at the so-called de-Polonisation and complete removal of the Polish population to the West of rivers Bug and San. Due to the threat in 1943–44 around 200,000 Poles living “beyond Bug” escaped to the General Governorship.

The relocations, taking place within the territory of the General Governorship, had quite a varied character, and resulted from the needs of the German civilian and military authorities. In bigger towns, apartments of higher quality were being taken away from their owners for the German officers and officials. These former owners were removed, and their belongings confiscated. Thus, for

instance, in Warsaw, a German quarter was established, encompassing several streets, where, side by side with residential houses, occupied by Germans, there were German administrative offices and facilities, serving the repression-related services. The German quarter in Warsaw in the period of occupation developed gradually. Until the outbreak of war the number of the German population was minimal (in 1931 – 824 persons). The core for the German quarter started to develop by November 1939, when the establishment of the German administration began. An area in downtown Warsaw was indicated, from which Poles were relocated. In connection with the necessity of accommodating the coming Germans this quarter was extended in several instalments. The biggest changes took place on February 6th, 1943, when the entire quarter was extended several times over. According to the data as of that day, the number of inhabitants of this quarter exceeded 20,000 persons – German civilians and functionaries of the occupying authorities. The majority of them were Germans from the Reich and those Polish citizens, who had declared their German origin (the so-called *Volksdeutsche*). For security reasons the quarter was in May 1944 isolated from the rest of the city and surrounded with barbed wire fence. Besides, in May 1944, the German military garrison in Warsaw – not considering the police force – was composed of 1,950 officers and 39,000 soldiers of *Wehrmacht* (Gawryszewski, 2009, p. 203). This garrison was significantly enlarged during the Warsaw Uprising, which lasted for 63 days (August 1st, 1944 – October 2nd, 1944). In connection with the approach of the front the German population was entirely evacuated to Germany.

It was the ambition of the authorities of the General Governorship to transform the “capital city” of Cracow into a German town. In order to achieve this aim the Jewish and Polish population had to be removed and the German population from the Reich brought in to replace the relocated. Elimination of Jews was carried out to the end. Initially, they were relocated to the concentration camp in Płaszów, situated nearby and to the ghetto in Podgórze, located within the periphery of the city, and thereafter they were transported to the death camps of Auschwitz and Bełżec. The emptied flats were meant for the incoming Germans, who were employed in the expanding administration. The number of the German population reached 25,000. This became the reason for the official announcement in May 1942 by the *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* that Cracow has become a purely German town (Schenk, 2009, p. 219). It was not mentioned that the German population accounted at that time merely for 8% of the total population in the city. In other urban centres of the General Governorship large garrisons of *Wehrmacht*, SS troops and various police formations were located.

The subsequent areas, where population relocations were taking place, were associated with the establishment of the military exercise grounds of *Wehrmacht* and *Waffen SS*. Approximately 171,000 inhabitants of rural areas were forced to abandon their homes (Łuczak, 1993, p. 145). Between the rivers Wisłoka and San the largest military grounds were created, with the garrisons of *Wehrmacht*, of the air forces, and, in Pustków, of SS “*Heidelager*”. Close by, a labour camp was established for Jews, Poles and Soviet POWs, employed to build the respective facilities. In the vicinity of Pustków the launching pads were installed of the

V-1 and V-2 missiles. They were moved to Pustków, after the bombing by the Allies, from Peenemünde on the island of Uznam. A similarly large-scale military exercise grounds were created in the vicinity of Koziernice, at the mouth of Pilica river, flowing into Vistula. This required liquidation of several dozens of villages (Dziewoński, Kosiński, 1967, p. 69, Fig. 15).

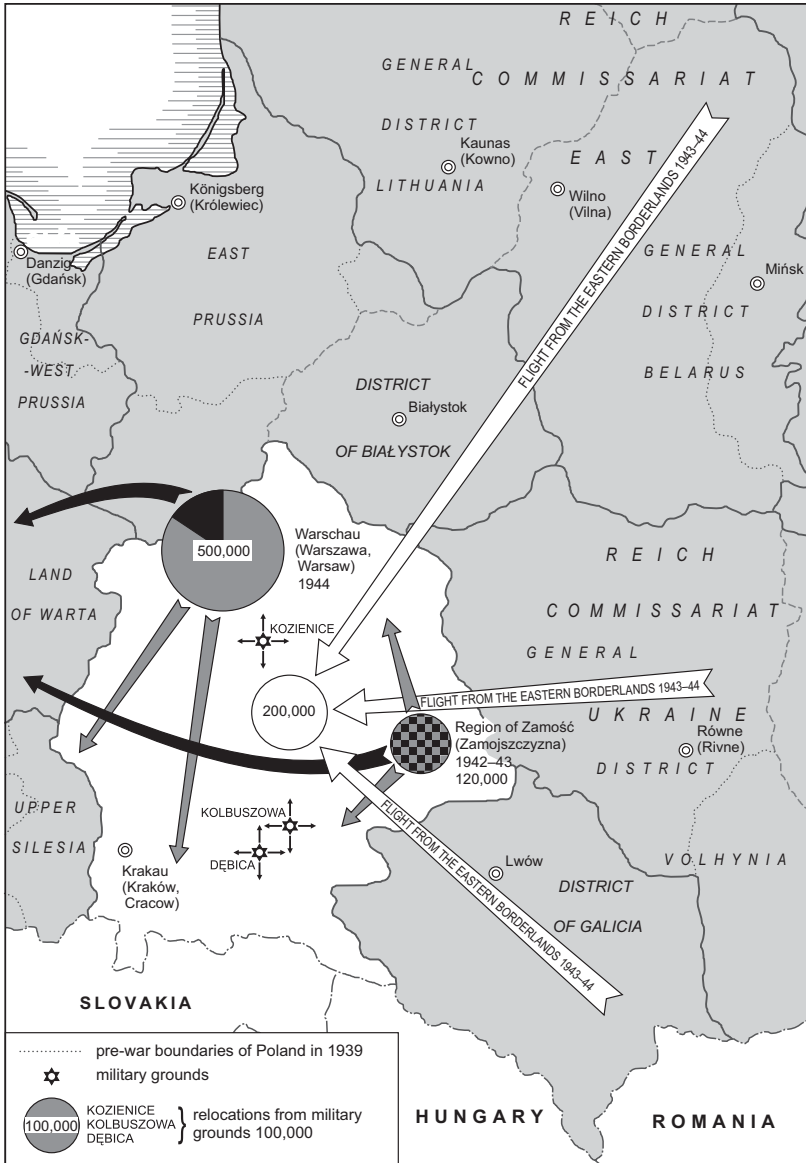


Fig. III.10. Forced movements of Polish population on the territory of General Governorship during the Nazi occupation
Source: own elaboration.

Population movements were also brought about by the immediate closeness of the military activities. The German-Soviet frontline stood in one place for almost half a year, until the January 1945 offensive of the Red Army. This line divided the territory of the General Governorship. The population living near to the frontline was removed both by the German and Soviet troops.

Over the entire area of the General Governorship, during the whole period of war local Polish population was subject to forced relocations. It is admitted that around one million Poles, living on this area, lost their entire wealth and were forced to leave their place of residence. These relocations were taking place within the boundaries of the General Governorship. If we add to that the movements considered already before, having much farther geographic reach, we can conclude that over the entire period of war, migrations on the area here considered affected millions of people. All of these movements took place by the use of force and were carried out ruthlessly. This brought about, ultimately, total political, social and demographic instability.

III.9. Evacuation and flight of the German population to the post-war Germany

The territory that Germany lost to Poland in the effect of the Potsdam verdict, was inhabited, according to the German census of 1939, by 8,885,400 persons. All of them had the citizenship of the Third Reich. Among those persons there were roughly one million with doubtless Slavic (Polish) roots. The ethnic consciousness of those people was vague. They were usually bilingual. At home they would use the Polish language, or its dialect, while outside of home – the German language. Most of them were loyal to the German state and the authorities. There were, among them, both the ones, who staunchly declared themselves to be Germans, and the “conforming” Poles.

Population distribution over the eastern territories of Germany was quite uneven. Relatively high demographic potential was concentrated within the southern belt. In Pomerania and in the southern part of East Prussia population density was not too high, and the level of urbanisation was low. This distinction can be illustrated with the data according to the post-war Polish administrative breakdown. Thus, in the belt of the three Polish southern voivodships, from Gliwice (Gleiwitz) (Upper Silesia) to Zgorzelec (Gerlitz) (at the post-war Polish-German border) 4,269,400 persons lived before the war, i.e. around 48% of the respective total (see Table III.19).

For purposes of analysis and assessment of the scale of evacuation and flight of the German population from the territory, which became after 1945 an integral part of the Polish state, an estimation must be established for the population of these areas in 1944, that is – before the population movements in question

here. It was already known at that time that the war would end with the defeat of the Third German Reich and that the territory of the eastern part of Germany would be occupied by the Soviet army, approaching from the East. German population at large, though, was yet not aware of the inevitable catastrophe, and even less – of the fact that they would soon be forced to leave their homeland.

Table III.19. Population of the eastern areas of Germany, which became after 1945 a part of Poland (data as of 1939)

Polish post-war voivodships	Area in sq. km	Population number
North-western part of Białystok voivodship ¹	2,584	125,900
Part of Gdańsk (Danzig) voivodship ²	5,071	694,100
Western part of Katowice (Kattowitz) voivodship ³	1,411	556,200
Koszalin (Köslin) voivodship	17,640	810,400
Olsztyn (Allenstein) voivodship	20,994	966,500
Opole (Oppeln) voivodship	9,410	1,066,700
Northern part of Poznań (Posen) voivodship ⁴	967	85,600
Szczecin (Stettin) voivodship	12,612	1,014,900
Wrocław (Breslau) voivodship and the city of Wrocław (Breslau)	18,946	2,646,500
Zielona Góra (Grünberg) voivodship	17,876	918,600
Totals ⁵	102,700	8,885,400

¹ Counties and towns of Elk (Lyck), Gołdap (Goldap) and Olecko (Treuburg).

² Counties and towns of Elbląg (Elbing), Kwidzyn (Marienwerder), Łębork (Leuenburg), Malbork (Marienburg), Sztum (Stuhm) and Gdańsk (Danzig).

³ Counties and towns of Bytom (Beuthen), Gliwice (Gleiwitz) and Dobrodzień (Guttentag).

⁴ County of Trzcianka (Schönlanke) and town of Piła (Schneidemühl).

⁵ The area of the territory that Germany lost to Poland, amounted, conform to the most reliable data, to 102,700 sq. km. If we perform summation according to the county-level units, we get the figure of 104,500 sq. km. The present author is not capable of telling whether this is an arithmetic error, or the effect of later changes in administrative boundaries. Without detailed consideration of this statistical issue, the sources are provided, containing information on the area and population of the so-called Polish Regained Lands.

Sources: Kosiński, Pudło (1960, p. 100); Dziewoński, Kosiński (1967, pp. 1–16); *Ziemia Zachodnie...* (1966, pp. 10; 42–43); *Historia Polski...* (2003, p. 263).

The difficulties in the estimation of the state of things in 1944 result from the multi-directional migrations of both German and Polish population, which took place in the years 1939–1944. This kind of demographic balance has been put together in the report by B. Nitschke (2000, pp. 232–233) and it can be subject to a rough scrutiny. According to the author mentioned the number of the German population on the areas to become a part of Poland was equal 12,339,400 (see Table III.20).

The author quoted treated all the citizens of the eastern provinces of Germany as persons of German nationality. This fact resulted rather from the inadequate definition of terms than from the intention of overestimating the number of German population. The number of the German population on the territory of Poland is given conform to the results of the Polish census of 1931 and

concerns the areas situated to the West of the Curzon line⁴². These figures do not give rise to reservations, even though there have been instances, when the German side questioned them. There are more doubts concerning the subsequent individual items. It can be supposed that they tend to be overestimated, but their verification can hardly be performed. The calculations, referred to, do not account for the war losses. In 1944 the German army had roughly 9 million soldiers. It can be estimated roughly that some 10% of this number were men from the eastern provinces of Germany. Several hundred thousand soldiers, mobilised in the eastern provinces, lost their lives between 1939 and 1944 in the war, while the remaining ones were far from their original places of residence. Many of them were still to die on the front.

Table III.20. Germans on the territory of Poland (within the boundaries after the end of the Potsdam conference) before the start of the flight and evacuation

Population category	Population number
Population of the eastern provinces of the Third Reich according to the national census of 17 May 1939	8,885,400
Germans in Poland within the boundaries of 1939	670,000
German settlers having come from the East and evacuated from the South-eastern part of the USSR in the years 1939–1944	900,000
German administrative staff on the territory of Poland within the boundaries as of 1939	750,000
Evacuated to avoid bombing	1,134,000
Total	12,339,400

Source: Nitschke (2000, p. 233).

When considering the demographic issues of the years of war one should not forget that on the areas of eastern Germany hundreds of thousands of workers brought from many European countries worked, with the major shares taken by those from Poland and Ukraine. Concentration camps of different magnitude still functioned there. Besides, quite a dense network of camps and oflag was functioning, in which the POWs of different nationalities were kept (Poles, Frenchmen, Russians, Englishmen)⁴³. On the other hand, it could be assumed that in the eastern part of Germany in 1944 there were no more Jews, since the respective Jewish population was exterminated in the death camps.

The change of the military situation of Germany, and especially the collapse of the eastern front, initiated a new phase of large-scale population movements.

⁴² The literature on the numbers and distribution of the German population in Poland is quite ample. A bibliography of the subject is provided in the book by Matelski (1999).

⁴³ Among the POWs there were, in particular, 6,000 Polish officers, interned in Woldenberg. They survived the war, in distinction from the vast majority of the Polish officers, captured by the Red Army.

Until that moment the motive force of the large migration movements were the German authorities, and in the eastern lands of Poland, in the years 1939–1941 – the Soviet authorities. As the Red Army approached and the real possibility appeared of the Soviets entering the Polish territories, the political situation started to change. The population that now felt the most endangered were the persons of German nationality. The crimes committed against the Slavic and Jewish populations suggested the possibility of retaliation. This possibility, anyway, was not being kept secret and it was known that the German population would have to bear the responsibility for the support given Hitler and his expansionist plans as well as the genocide.

The defeat of the German army in the East and in the West, and the approach of the Soviet troops made the Nazi authorities face the issue of preparation of evacuation of the German population. The first phase of evacuation encompassed eastern Galicia. At the news of crossing the river Zbrucz and the approach of the Soviet Army to Lwów (L'viv), the German administration and the German civilian population started to leave the threatened areas already in March 1944. There were at that time in Galicia 80,000 Germans having come from the Reich, and 62,000 Germans of local origin. Besides, the German administration took into account the necessity of evacuating the persons having collaborated with the authorities of the General Governorship. Some 98,000 Ukrainians and 25,000 Poles were classified in this group. Altogether 245,000 persons were supposed to leave their places of residence (Meissner, 1987, p. 187). Not all of them managed to leave. This was associated with chaos and the delay in taking of decisions on organisation of the evacuation transports. In July 1944 German authorities started the evacuation from the region of Lublin. Similarly as in the District of Galicia the surprise caused by the rapid approach of the front and the fright of the Red Army brought about disorder and organisational collapse. German population aimed directly at the Reich or just crossed Vistula river and remained in the District of Radom. In addition, Germans unfit for work from the entire General Governorship were sent to Hungary (90,000) and to Slovakia (30,000). Thereafter, the evacuation of all the Germans residing to the East of Vistula started. This action was initiated in accordance with the directives from the authorities of the General Governorship on 14 July 1944. Then, on 20 July 1944 evacuation from the eastern counties of the District of Warsaw began (including the right-bank part of Warsaw, Praga). Immediately after that the order was issued for the German civilians to leave the area of Warsaw. At the end of July 1944 the panic in Warsaw was under control. This was associated with the intended counteroffensive of the 9th German army within the foreground of Warsaw. The disadvantageous military situation forced the governor Hans Frank to start the planned evacuation of Germans from the District of Cracow. The so-called de-congestion (*Auflockerung*) was initiated already in April 1944. It was connected with the sending back to the Reich of children and women of German nationality.

Stabilisation of the frontline, which stood still between September 1944 and January 1945 on the line of Vistula river, slowed down the planned evacuation of the western part of General Governorship. It was only the start of the Soviet offensive in January 1945 that caused the necessity of a new evacuation action.

The catastrophe of the Germans on the front and the rapid pace of westward movement of the Red Army changed the intended planned evacuation into a disorderly flight, which encompassed the majority of the German population⁴⁴. Already in autumn 1944 the westward movement of the front brought it in the North close to East Prussia. The areas of the proper Reich were threatened the earliest at exactly this segment of the front.

The Nazi propaganda assured that the Soviet army would not conquer the East Prussia. The defence would be secured by the powerful fortification system. The first Soviet detachments to enter East Prussia were repelled, but this was of little strategic importance. Planned evacuation of the population started, having encompassed 600,000 persons (Sobczak, 1966, p. 340). Until the end of 1944 evacuation was still being carried out in a planned and organised manner. The situation changed completely in January 1945. The troops of the III Belarussian Front struck on January 13th, 1945, to the North of Gąbin. After five days of heavy fighting the German defence lines were pierced through and on January 26th, 1945, the Soviet army reached the outer defence lines of Königsberg, to then change the direction of attack towards Lidzbark Warmiński (Heilsberg) with the intention of surrounding the eastern group of the German army. In parallel, on January 14th, 1945, the offensive of the II Belarussian Front, commanded by General Konstantin Rokossowski, started. On January 21st, 1945, these troops reached Ostróda (Osterode), and a day later entered Olsztyn (Allenstein). The Soviet January offensive brought about chaos and complete disorganisation. The Soviet troops moved very fast in the western direction. The outflanking manoeuvres of the armoured columns destroyed the successive lines of defence. On January 26th, 1945, the first detachments of the Soviet army reached the Vistula Lagoon and cut off the area of East Prussia. Until that time only 250,000

⁴⁴ The principles of evacuation of the population from the areas of eastern Germany were elaborated already in the middle of 1944. The Nazi authorities prepared secret instructions, associated with the manner and timing of implementation of the evacuation plans. They were composed of five parts. In the first one the basic indications were given (*Grundsatzlinien*), defining the prerequisites for and the scope of evacuation of the population, as well as destination points of particular transports. In the second part the recommendations were provided for the initial preparation to the evacuation (*Vorausmassnahmen*). The third part of the plan was constituted by the instructions directly related to the immediate execution of the evacuation orders upon a predefined sign (*In Erwartung*). This phase consisted already in the stand-by alert. Finally, the fourth and fifth parts of the plan concerned the ultimate evacuation upon the reception of the codewords I and II (*Stichwort I und II*), referred to as the first and second degree of evacuation (*Räumungsstufe I und II*). The areas, from which the inhabitants were to be evacuated, were divided up into three zones, of which the first one was the area of immediate threat, the second – the transitional area, and the third – the area receiving the transported population. Despite the so precise plans their actual implementation ended with total improvisation, and thereafter the catastrophe. This fact resulted from many interrelated causes. Evacuation was to start at a signal, which was issued usually with a delay and too late. There was shortage of transport means. The Soviet offensive moved forward very quickly. The front moved in just two weeks over the distance of more than 450 km (from the middle course of Vistula to Odra in the area of Kostrzyń). All this was taking place in conditions of a harsh winter. Complete disorganisation and chaos reigned. Millions of frightened refugees headed westwards, leaving behind thousands of the dead of exhaustion and frost. Numerous Germans died during the passage of the front and from the hands of the Soviet soldiers. Those, who made it after several weeks to central Germany, had no place to stay and nothing to eat.

Germans managed to escape to the West. It was decided to evacuate the remaining ones over the sea. This evacuation took on a dramatic course. People were directed to cross the frozen waters of the Vistula Lagoon, where many drowned. Despite the difficulties, approximately 450,000 German refugees went over this way to Gdańsk (Danzig). Close to 200,000 refugees went from Piława (until 1946: Pillau, nowadays Baltiysk) along the Vistula Bar. Some 450,000 refugees were transported with ships to Germany or to Denmark. Many of these ships were sunk, including “Wilhelm Gustloff”, torpedoed on 30 January 1945, with 4,749 refugees from East Prussia on board⁴⁵. Only 822 persons were saved. This marine catastrophe brought already many more victims than the famous sinking of “Titanic”. The very same Soviet submarine, which sunk the ship “Wilhelm Gustloff”, attacked with torpedoes on February 9th, 1945, and also sunk the passenger transporter “General Steuben”, with roughly 5,000 refugees on board, evacuated from Piława. Only 500 persons were saved. In the night of 16th to 17th of April, 1945, close to Ustka, the German passenger ship “Goya” was sunk, carrying 6–7 thousand refugees and soldiers. Of those, only 165 were saved. Many other smaller ships, carrying passengers, were sunk by the Soviet submarines (Podlasek, 1995, pp. 83–89).

The subsequent Soviet outflanking manoeuvre reached Baltic Sea in the vicinity of Koszalin (Köslin) and on March 1st, 1945, the overland escape route towards Germany for the inhabitants of Gdańsk Pomerania was cut off. The sole way of escape was over the sea, and it was made use of on a massive scale. According to the data quoted by J. Sobczak, between 23 January and 9 May 1945 altogether 1,206,793 persons, of whom 679,541 were civilians, were transported over the sea from Królewiec (Königsberg, nowadays – Kaliningrad), Piława (Pillau), Gdynia (Gotenhafen), Gdańsk (Danzig) and Hel (Hela). In the same period the shuttle traffic from Królewiec (Königsberg) to Gdynia (Gotenhafen), from Krynica Morska (Kahlberg-Liep) to Gdańsk (Danzig) and Hel (Hela) moved 728,131 persons, of whom 494,485 were civilians. Further, from the Pomeranian coast – from Darłówek (Rügenwaldemünde), Ustka (Stolpmünde), Kołobrzeg (Kolberg) and Świnoujście (Swinemünde) – altogether 182,533 persons were transported to the West, including 136,579 civilians. Jointly, by various ways and means, between 23 January and 8 May 1945, 2,204,477 persons were transported over the Baltic Sea, including at least 1,335,585 civilians (Sobczak, 1966, p. 350).

Simultaneously, spontaneous and disorderly overland flight of the German population to the West started. Initially, train convoys were being organised, and later on, when this turned out to be impossible, road convoys were formed, which moved slowly westwards. All this was taking place in conditions of sharp, frosty winter. The columns would start marching at the last moment, when the Soviet tanks were already approaching. The report of K. Golczewski (1971) contains many interesting facts associated with the numbers of the evacuated persons and the losses borne during the flight. The demographic losses among the German refugees were very high. Quite significant divergences exist in this domain as to the

⁴⁵ Estimates of a later date show that the ship could carry up to 8–10 thousand civilian and military refugees.

statistical estimates. We can cite, for instance, the fact that the civilian population of East Prussia, whose number was at the end of 1944 at 2,322,000, lost in the terminal phase of war – conform to one of these estimates – 299,000 persons (Golczewski, 1971, p. 191). Less than 30% of the population of East Prussia and the province of Gdańsk-West Prussia remained in their places of residence. The remaining ones either reached the destinations to the West of Odra river, or did not survive the horrors of evacuation.

The Soviet offensive moved very fast along the central axis of the military activities, the line Warsaw-Berlin. The Russian armoured troops reached Odra river in the first days of February and took a bridgehead on the western bank of the river in the vicinity of Kostrzyń (Küstrin). Within the central lowland belt some 2 million Germans lived. The evacuation plans for this population were elaborated in detail, but in just few days they became completely obsolete. At the beginning, railway transport functioned yet, while in the subsequent phase the road convoys set out from individual counties, usually overcome by fighting on their way. The evacuation of the German civilian population in the here considered central belt, including the so-called Land of Warta, did not have such a tragic course as to the North, in Pomerania, but still it entailed a lot of victims. In January approximately 600,000 of the local civilian population were transported across Odra. These were both the native inhabitants of German nationality and the settlers, who moved to that area during the war.

Within the southern part of the Polish territory, the Ukrainian Front moved on and quickly overcame the German defences. After having encircled Cracow and Upper Silesia the troops of the Front reached on January 22nd the river Odra close to Brzeg (Brieg) and Oława (Ohlau). Thus, the escape route in the western direction through Wrocław was cut off. Hence, the wave of German refugees from Cracow and Upper Silesia took the south-western direction, as the sole route available. The authorities of the General Governorship escaped in panic from Cracow, taken by the Soviet army on January 19th, 1945. The German political entity, established on the central territories of Poland, named officially General Gouvernement, ceased to exist. Hundreds of thousands of German refugees, mixed with the military detachments and the evacuated prisoners of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, moved towards Moravia or Lower Silesia. The evacuation of Wrocław (Breslau) was announced at the very last instance. The official order was given on 21 January 1945. It made women and children leave the city on foot. In the temperature of -16° to -20°C approximately 500,000 persons set out from the city and its surroundings. The marching columns were overtaken by the fighting (Kaps, 1952–1953, p. 52). Thus, the number of victims among these people was very high. Yet, hundreds of thousands managed to get out of the sack. According to approximate calculations around 3.2 million Germans left Silesia until the end of World War II, having moved to Saxony, Thuringia, Bavaria and Bohemia (Sobczak, 1966, pp. 354–355).

German population having stayed in their locations of residence suffered serious losses, as well. Numerous victims among the civilian population were caused by the defence of particular towns, turned into fortresses Wrocław (Breslau), Głogów (Glogau), Kołobrzeg (Kolberg)). It is also beyond doubt that many German

citizens were killed by the Soviet soldiers. The population balance published after the war by the German scholars provides the estimate of the losses borne within the territories lost by Germany due to war and the Free City of Gdańsk (Danzig) equal 1,882,000 persons, of whom 594,000 would die directly due to the military activities (the military staff and the victims of the air raids), while close to 1.3 million were considered to be the losses brought about by the passing of the front and the entering of the Soviet army. They were referred to as the so-called unexplained cases (Dziewoński, Kosiński, 1967, pp. 65–66). Polish scholars question these calculations and consider them to be tendentiously overestimated⁴⁶.

It is very difficult to determine how many Germans left during the last few months of war the areas located between the German-Soviet line of fighting as of 12 January 1945 and the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers (Oder-Neisse line), which was soon to become the western boundary of Poland. The most frequent estimates speak of the evacuation or flight of five million Germans (not considering the military). The former Polish citizens of German nationality, who lived on the territory of Poland within its boundaries of 31 August 1939, left this territory in panic and haste. Then, there was mass flight of the German settlers originating from the core areas of the Reich and the persons of German nationality from various European countries, having been settled on the territory mentioned. These two groups of population felt most threatened, not only from the side of the Soviet army. They also feared the retaliation from the Polish side. The former Polish citizens were afraid of the responsibility for the disloyalty with respect to the country, whose citizens they had been. German settlers were aware that they took in possession unlawfully the farms and the dwellings having belonged to the deported Poles. These two categories of the German population left in their vast majority the occupied Polish territories. The population inhabiting the eastern territories of the Reich, in its boundaries from before the war, was evacuated or escaped for fear of the approaching Soviet army. The fear was yet magnified by the official German propaganda, as well as by the awareness of the cruelties committed by the German army in the East. Information coming from the areas taken by the Red Army strengthened the conviction of the German population that a blood shedding retaliation was to be expected.

After the passing of the front and the retreat of the German army, when the Soviet army marched in, German population was subject to cruel repressions and terror.⁴⁷ Information on such events was broadly disseminated by the German

⁴⁶ At a later date the German scholars considered this criticism to be justified. For many years after the war in the German analyses, dealing with the losses of the civilian German population, resulting from the “expelling from the homeland”, the estimates were provided reaching 2 million of the dead. It was only relatively recently that these estimates of the total number of victims among the refugees and the relocated have been lowered to 500–600,000 persons. Yet, it turned out that even those lower estimates were higher than the actual losses, amounting to 400–420,000 persons (Haar, 2007, p. 11).

⁴⁷ Soldiers of the Red Army committed numerous mass murders and acts of violence. Directly after having crossed the boundary of East Prussia in the area to the North of Wisztynieckie Lake (Wystiter See), Soviet detachments reached the locality of Nemmersdorf, where on October 22nd, 1944, some 70 inhabitants of the village were killed. The victims included women, who had been raped before (Nitschke, 2000, p. 57). The village of Nemmersdorf lies now in the

authorities. This brought about panic, mass suicides and disorderly flight of the civilian population to the West. The German literature of the subject, devoted to the fate of the German civilian population on the territory, occupied by the Soviet army, and then forced to leave, is very ample. The known and frequently quoted reports on this theme include Lemberg (1949), Kaps (1952–53), Grau (1966), *Dokumentation* (1984), Benz (1985), Schöning (1985), Nawratil (1987, 2000).⁴⁸ The facts, illustrating the magnitude of sufferings and humiliation of the German population, were summarised and synthesised in a chronological setting, based on German literature, by the Polish scholar M. Podlasek (1995). She describes and comments upon numerous beastly deeds of the Soviet soldiers, mainly committed with respect to German women. She also shows the ruthless behaviour of the functionaries of the Polish local administration, having made every effort to carry out the relocation of the German population in the shortest possible time period. The quality of this study consists in the collection of ample documentation, whose moral qualification is obvious. This particular author, in distinction from the common opinion of the Polish scholars, is quite sceptic about the correctness of decisions made at the Potsdam conference.

The number of the German refugees, who fled the approaching Soviet army and came to Germany in the post-war boundaries constitutes a debatable and until now not resolved issue. The literature of the subject provides most often the estimate of around five million. It appears that the number was actually somewhat higher. According to the German estimates it exceeded six, or even seven million. One can also quote, for illustration, one of the highest estimates (see Table III.21).

Determination of the true number of the refugees is a difficult, because immediately after the passage of the front a part of the German population (roughly one million people) returned to the areas situated to the East of the Odra and Nysa Łużycka line. Those people were then relocated again. During the first half of the year 1945 the situation at the border was highly irregular. The boundary was manned by the Polish military only as late as in July and August 1945, and

district of Kaliningrad (Königsberg), to the South of Gąbin (Gumbinnen, nowadays Gusev). The name of the village was changed by the Russians to Mayakovskoye.

⁴⁸ One of the most popular books in Germany, devoted to the dramatic events of the years 1944 and 1945 within the Polish-German borderland is the classical study of J. Thorwald, entitled *The Great Flight*, in English translation: *Flight in the Winter* (1979, 1995). Thorwald presents the enormous sufferings, inflicted by the Soviet army, which the escaping German population and the retreating German military had to go through. The scenery of the respective events and the described shocking incidents, demonstrating the cruelty of the victors, are in most cases true. Yet, in its totality, the book is definitely selective and extremely tendentious. One of the fundamental falsities resides in the fact that the author assumes the territories being lost by Germany to be uniquely inhabited by the Germans, which is very far from truth. On the large parts of these territories Poles dominated, who perceived the panic withdrawal of the Germans as the act of historical justice. When commenting the events, taking place at the beginning of 1945, Thorwald writes of the loss of Warsaw, of the defense of "German Poznań" and of the ingratitude of the inhabitants of Prague. Further, when presenting the personality of *Gauleiter* Arthur Greiser – similarly as with many other leading Nazi officers – he does not wish to enter into their murderous activity regarding Jews and Poles. This popular books confirms, therefore, the opinion, that Germans perceive the history of the last phase of the war in a completely different light than the nations of Central and Eastern Europe.

even then not too tightly. The here provided German balance of the population movement accounts for the entire East Prussia (that is – including the later district of Kaliningrad). This technical issue also calls for a correction. The question of the number of refugees is quite complex, since it is associated with the determination of losses, borne by the German population in the period of passing of the military front and immediately after the Soviet troops marched in. This question gives rise until today to controversies among the German, Polish and Russian scholars.

Table III.21. Number of German refugees from Poland and from the territories incorporated into Poland

Province	Numbers of refugees and evacuated persons
East Prussia	2,053,000
Pomerania	1,081,000
Eastern part of Brandenburg	330,000
Silesia	3,218,000
Polish territories	812,000
Total	7,494,000

Source: Gawryszewski (2005, p. 452).

According to the calculations of the German historians, between 75,000 and 100,000 persons were killed by the Soviet soldiers only within the areas of East Prussia and Pomerania. This would be equivalent to 2–3% of the total pre-war population of these areas (Nitschke, 2000, p. 58). These crimes did not have an organised character. Usually, they were the individual actions of the Soviet military, consisting in murders, mass rapes of women, and robberies⁴⁹. Such events would happen mainly during the short period after the German army retreated. The crimes were committed under the influence of alcohol, with utmost cruelty. This is confirmed by the reports from many persons, who managed to survive this nightmare⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ The accounts of the German women refugees, who went through rapes and cruelty from the side of the victors, were collected and published (Weber, 2008), as well as commented upon (Bachmann, Kranz, 1997).

⁵⁰ The brutal behaviour of the Soviet soldiers with respect to the German civilian population did not result, though, from the lack of discipline and individual licence. They had full freedom and approval of committing murders, robberies and rapes. The evidence is provided by the stance taken by Stalin himself, as noted by Polish communist leader Władysław Gomułka: “The pronouncement [of Stalin] was made in front of our delegation just after the Soviet army entered at the beginning of 1945 East Prussia, that is – the territory having belonged before the war to Germany. Stalin was highly excited by the fact, he radiated joy and at the same time boiled with hatred and the desire of a blood shedding revenge on the Germans. He told us that he ordered to place at the roads on the quite recent border the boards with the inscription: *Zdes’ nachinayetsya proklataya Germaniya (Here the damned Germany starts)*. At the same time, he uttered the words full of sadistic feeling of retaliation, just soaked with blood: *Nashi boytsy nachnut sey-chas r’ezat’ Germantsev (Our fighters shall now start to slaughter the Germans)*. He must have had

Situation gradually stabilised. Soviet military administration (local headquarters) were transferring the competence onto the developing Polish local administration. Yet, commanders of the Soviet garrisons would still play the decisive role on the local scale. Conflicts in relations between Polish and Soviet authorities were quite frequent⁵¹ (Nitschke, 1997, pp. 80–81). Such conflicts concerned both the local assets and the attitude towards the German population. Numerous groups of the Soviet specialists were taking away the industrial plants, and their equipment was transported to the USSR. This caused opposition from the Polish local, as well as central administration. Efforts were made to hamper such activities by all available means. Polish authorities intervened directly with Stalin and Molotov. This, however, did not produce any positive effect. The opinions, concerning the future fate of the remaining German population, differed both among the Polish political parties and in the society at large. It should be remembered that the memory of the genocide, carried out by the Nazi authorities, was very fresh, and the slogans calling for revenge were popular. Yet, in spite of this, the repressions, which were addressed at the German population, were absolutely incomparable with what the Polish population experienced during the five years of the Nazi occupation. Still, both nations have a painful memory of these tragic historical events (Mazur, 2009; Orłowski, 2009).

After a relatively fast installation of Polish administration, its efforts were aimed at the reconstruction of economic life and integration of the newly (re)gained areas with the rest of Poland. For these reasons maximum use of the still present German manpower was intended. Germans were directed to work in farming and to removal of debris from the destroyed towns. German specialists would be employed in the attempts of starting production in the devastated industrial plants. They were granted protection and relatively adequate living standards.

the image of this butchery at that instance before his eyes, for his face twisted with enchantment, his small, half-closed eyes, set in the pockmarked face, burned with some weird flames” (Gomułka, 1994, p. 414). The account of Gomułka’s on the attitude of Stalin regarding the German civilian population on the areas taken by the Soviet troops finds confirmation in the known book by Milovan Djilas, who wrote: “Soon after my return from Moscow I heard, to my dismay, of a much more significant example of Stalin’s ‘indulgency’ for the trespasses of the Red Army. It was namely so that when passing across East Prussia, Soviet soldiers, especially the tank units, would drive into one place and kill all the German civilian refugees – women and children. When informed of this and asked what to do, Stalin answered: ‘We give our soldiers too many orders and advice, let them have a bit of initiative’” (Džilas, 1962, p. 85).

⁵¹ After the passing of the front and termination of the acts of violence of the Soviet soldiers with respect to Germans, the German-Russian relations started to normalise. For the remaining German population the civil Polish authorities were a more dangerous enemy than the local Soviet headquarters. This resulted from a different perception of Poles and Russians. The latter were cruel enemies and occupants, but they did not have the intention to appropriate the land, on which the German population lived. On the other hand, Poles aimed at relocation of Germans, and did not make a mystery of the objective of complete Polishisation of the territories granted by the big powers to Poland. That is why the German population demonstrated as far as possible lack of connection with Nazism and manifested their pro-Soviet and anti-Polish attitudes. This, in turn, made many of the local Soviet headquarters take the side of the Germans and protect them from resettlement, especially so as they were needed for economic reasons, mainly in the dismantling of the production plants.

Based on orders from the top level, establishment of camps for the (broadly conceived) German population was started. They would be established in the former Nazi camp facilities, where appropriate technical infrastructure existed. In these camps Germans, the *Volksdeutsche*, as well as native Polish population, suspect of being disloyal with respect to the Polish statehood, were interned. In frequent cases, quite incidental persons would get into the camps, on the basis of denunciations or personal animosities. The actual number of these camps is until now debated. According to the German sources approximately 200,000 persons passed through these camps. Polish scholars in principle confirm this estimation.

On the basis of the quite detailed studies of a Polish author (Stankowski, 2002, 2003) it can be stated that in 17 biggest camps 139,900 Germans were interned. The most known camps included Jaworzno (where also Ukrainians were kept), Łambinowice, Mielęcin, Świętochłowice and Potulice. Living conditions in the camps were very difficult. Food supply was insufficient, while work was hard. Infectious diseases were spreading among the interned, assuming the form of epidemics. There were numerous deaths, especially among the elderly. According to the calculations of the German Red Cross, the number of Germans having died in all the camps on the territory of Poland was 27,847. The highest number of deaths is attributed to the camp in Jaworzno – 6,987 persons, then to Łambinowice – between 1,000 and 1,500, the complex of camps situated around Potulice – 4,495, Sikawa – 1,247, Świętochłowice – between 1,600 and 1,800 (Stankowski, 2003, p. 45). These data, perhaps a bit overestimated, imply that every fifth inmate did not survive the stay in the labour camp. Prisoners would die not only due to exhaustion and sicknesses. In the camp of Świętochłowice, for instance, Germans and Ukrainians were subject to beating and persecutions, and on October 4th, 1945, 40 prisoners were shot dead⁵². During a couple of years after the war German POWs remained still on the territory of Poland. They worked primarily in the hard coal mines. At the beginning, 48,082 persons were employed. They were gradually released, so that in 1949 only 4,400 still worked. The releases of the POWs were also associated with the action of relocation of the Germans from Upper Silesia (Linek, 1999).

Various forms of discrimination, with varying degree of repressions, were essentially temporary, and were gradually limited with time. The fundamental political objective of the Polish authorities was complete Polonisation of the acquired German territories. This required relocation of Germans to post-war Germany. On the other hand, transports were expected of the repatriates from the East and persons returning from emigration from the West. Flats in towns and farms in the countryside should have been prepared for those expected to come. Yet, the most important reason, which stood behind the acceleration of the resettlement action, was associated with the expected final verdict of the three powers, concerning the western boundary of Poland. One of the essential justifications

⁵² The perpetrator of this crime was the commander of the camp, Samuel Morel. Himself a Jew, he survived a death camp. He was taking revenge for the deaths of his parents, killed by the Nazis. In a later period he emigrated to Israel. Polish authorities demanded his extradition in the 1990s, in order to judge him, but Israel did not agree to have Morel face the Polish court.

for the incorporation of these territories into Poland was the argument that Polish population was already dominating on these territories, while the resettlement of the remaining German population would not constitute a more serious technical problem.

That is why the Polish civilian and military authorities did not wait for the acceptance and legalisation from the side of the big powers, and started forced relocation of the German population. The relocations prior to the verdict from Potsdam lasted between April and July 1945. The estimates, concerning the number of persons resettled in this period are highly differentiated. The most reliable estimates speak of the removal of 400,000 Germans in this period. Adding the period after the conference in Potsdam, when, in the second half of 1945, 593,400 persons were resettled, we obtain the total number of roughly one million of the resettled (Nitschke, 2000, p. 234). The subsequent resettlement actions were already agreed upon and organised together with the allied authorities, occupying the territory of Potsdam Germany.

III.10. Repatriation of the Polish population from the areas to the East of the Curzon line⁵³

The establishment of the new Polish eastern border in effect of decisions taken in Teheran and Yalta, entailing the irrevocable loss of the eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth, brought up the question of the population of Polish nationality, living outside of the boundaries of the Polish state in its post-war shape. Solution to this question required signing appropriate agreements with the Soviet authorities. The Polish-Soviet talks on the subject were conducted over a long time and encountered significant difficulties. Repatriation required namely an unambiguous explanation of the issue of citizenship of the persons inhabiting the areas to the East of the Curzon line and having been before the war Polish citizens (Kersten, 1974, p. 96). This issue was debated in the talks between the

⁵³ It was already mentioned in the Introduction that the terminology, associated with various forms of politically motivated migrations are treated quite arbitrarily in the present report. The use of notions, established on the basis of strict humanitarian, temporal or geographic criteria was explicitly given up. The situation is similar for the resettlement of the Polish population from the post-war territory of the USSR. The literature of the subject accepts commonly the term of "repatriation" for the resettlement of Polish population from the former Polish Eastern Borderlands to the area of the so-called Yalta-Potsdam Poland. This, however, was not so much "repatriation", but rather "expatriation" of the native population from their home lands. Given the coercion applied "expulsion" would be here a more appropriate term. One could also use other terms, such as "resettlement", "banishment", or "dislodging". Alas, during almost fifty years only the term of "repatriation" was used with respect to the movement of the Polish population from the Eastern Borderlands to Poland in its new boundaries. The term became so popular that replacing it by another word, even if perhaps much more correct, might lead to a terminological turmoil.

Polish government in exile and the Soviet authorities on the Kremlin. These authorities maintained their formal position, namely that all the inhabitants acquired, conform to (the Soviet) law, the citizenship of the USSR. Poles, on the other hand, considered them still to be Polish citizens. During formation of the Polish army in the USSR, commanded by General Władysław Anders, the Soviet authorities made an exception with respect to the persons of Polish and partly also Jewish nationality. Later on, after having broken diplomatic relations with the Polish government in exile (in London), they renounced this exception. In view of the lack of formal regulation of this question mass resettlement (“repatriation”) of Poles to the post-war Poland was beyond question. That is why negotiations started between the so-called Polish Committee for National Liberation (Polish acronym: PKWN), a Soviet construct, and the Soviet administration. The negotiations were quite difficult, but ended with a partial success. The agreements signed by the representatives of the PKWN and the authorities of the USSR, and then the “governments” of the Ukrainian SSR and the Lithuanian SSR, of 9 May 1944 and 22 September 1944, as well as the agreement between the governments of Poland and the Soviet Union of 6 July 1945, established that the persons of Polish and Jewish nationality, who had had Polish citizenship before 17 September 1939 and had permanent residence on the territories ceded to the Soviet Union, were entitled to choose their citizenship and location of residence between Poland and the Soviet Union.

The issue was additionally complicated by the lack of criteria concerning nationality. Polish delegation, being aware that the formal requirements envisaged in the repatriation option questionnaire, will make repatriation impossible for many persons, tried to make the respective decisions based on the principle of national self-identification of the individuals. Yet, this recommendation was only partly observed in the practice of repatriation.

At the instant Polish territories located between the new eastern border of the post-war Poland and the one defined in the Treaty of Riga after the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1921, fell again in 1944 to the Red Army, and thus were to belong to the Soviet Union, they were supposedly the home to roughly four million Poles, conform to the estimates of the then Polish authorities. In reality this number was lower. It is estimated that together with the few remaining Jews there were a bit more than 3.5 million Poles on this territory. In case of realisation of complete repatriation, transport of such a huge mass of people would constitute an essential logistic problem.

For carrying out the organisational tasks associated with the resettlement action the State Repatriation Office was established by virtue of the decree of the PKWN of 7 October 1944. The Office was meant to take care of the relocated persons. Further, a special office of the Government’s Representative for Repatriation was also established, meant to co-ordinate the entire action⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ Proper execution of the repatriation of Poles from the East required organising an appropriate institutional and technical infrastructure. The State Repatriation Office (Polish acronym PUR) was established for this purpose. On the basis of agreements signed with the representatives of the USSR three seats, located to the East of the Curzon line, were set up: in Łuck (for the Ukrainian SSR), in Baranowicze (for the Belarusian SSR), and in Vilna (for the Lithuanian

Conform to the agreements signed, the resettlement of the Polish population was to have a freewill character. This was, however, understood in a different manner by Poles and by the Soviet authorities. The latter were interested in getting rid of the Polish intelligentsia and the population displaying strong national identity. That is why they had a positive attitude towards the emigration of the urban population. Some towns, especially the larger ones, had definitely Polish character in terms of language and culture (Ukrainians accounted before the war in Lwów for 15% of total population, while in Vilna only 2% of population of the city was of Lithuanian nationality).

The Soviet side, similarly as in 1939, wished very much to de-Polonise these towns. Soviets were aware of the inimical attitude of their inhabitants to the Soviet system. The situation was quite different with respect to the Polish peasant population. It was assumed that this population would be loyal to the communist authorities. They were treated as labour force, needed in the local economy. Yet, this issue was not treated too rigorously.

The new Polish administration planned to encompass with repatriation all Poles. This was associated with the elaborated program of settling the Northern and Western Lands, (re)gained after the war. On the other hand, Polish anticommunist organisations appealed not to leave the home regions. They hoped that the boundaries just delineated were not finally established and the outbreak of the World War III was expected, which would have resulted in bringing back the pre-war situation. There were, though, certain additional political events, which influenced the scope and the rate of repatriation. The first of these was the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, which started in the region of Volhynia, and then spilled over to the so-called Eastern Galicia. In effect of the decision, taken by the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), the military action was started, aiming at extermination of the Polish population. It consisted in the blood shedding pacification of the villages, inhabited by Poles. This genocide was perpetrated by the detachments of the Ukrainian Insurrection Army (UPA, according to the original acronym). The pacifications started in February 1943 and their intensity peaked in summer 1943. The objective was to liquidate 530 villages, inhabited by Polish population. In the framework of realisation of this program the inhabitants of several dozen Polish villages were exterminated in the most cruel manner. Without going into details, which were subject to scientific analysis, this ethnic purge brought the death of 40,000 to 60,000 Poles.⁵⁵ The remaining population, having avoided the extermination, started to concentrate in larg-

SSR). These seats of PUR, in turn, would organise the district centres – 19 of them in Ukraine, 12 in Belarus, and 21 in Lithuania. They were overseeing the repatriation and tried to cooperate with the local Soviet authorities. Frequent conflicts occurred in relations with these authorities, since the Soviet side often sabotaged or hampered the repatriation. At the same time, on the territory of entire Poland the provincial, district and county settlement inspectorates were established, which directed the transports of the persons repatriated from the USSR to their new locations of residence (Sula, 2002, pp. 25–32).

⁵⁵ In a monumental work on the crimes of the Ukrainian nationalists against the Polish population of Volhynia the estimates of the numbers of victims are provided (Siemaszko W., Siemaszko E., 2008). As many as 19,379 of the dead were precisely identified in terms of personal data. Another estimate of the number of Poles murdered in Volhynia was provided by an histori-

er centres under the protection of the Polish guerrilla troops. This was the area of activity of the 27th Division of the Home Army. Retaliatory actions against the Ukrainian population started, as well. On these areas the Ukrainian population dominated very clearly, and so the strength of the two sides was incomparable. Total destabilisation followed. The sole way to avoid the successive pogroms was to get repatriated to Poland. This was the reason why a vast majority of Poles, residing between rivers Bug and Zbrucz, were forced to leave for Poland. Poles, living on the eastern side of Zbrucz, where the UPA detachments were not active, largely remained on place.

The purposeful and ruthless extermination of the Polish population did not only occur in Volhynia. It started there and brought complete de-Polonisation of the former province of Volhynia. Yet, it extended into the Eastern Galicia (the former provinces of Tarnopol and Stanisławów, as well as the central and eastern parts of the voivodship of Lwów). The action, though, did not take there such extreme aspects as in Volhynia. This resulted from many reasons. First, the number of Polish population on this area was bigger, and they were better organised. The detachments of the Home Army functioned on this area, prepared for defence and ultimately also retaliation. Additionally, the civilisation and cultural level of the Greek-Catholic (Uniate) Ukrainian population in Galicia was much higher than in the Ukrainian Orthodox villages of Volhynia. Old traditions of law-abiding, originating from the Austrian heritage, had a soothing influence on the potential chauvinistic abuses. Still, also here several hundred Polish villages were destroyed, and a dozen or more thousand Poles were killed. Terror from the side of the detachments of UPA forced many Poles to concentrate in towns and to flight to the areas situated on the western side of rivers San and Bug.

Polish population was also decimated by the previous Soviet repressions and deportations (1939–1941). All this together resulted in the decrease of the number of Polish population in Eastern Galicia. According to the data as of 1 January 1939 there were 1,478,000 Poles (28% of the total population), on 1 January 1941 – 963,000, on 1 March 1943 – 801,000, and on 1 January 1945 – 837,000. These estimates suggest that the number of Poles decreased between 1939 and 1945 by 641,000. In the same period (between January 1st, 1939, and January 1st, 1945) Jewish population, subject to extermination, dwindled from 521,000 to 26,000. The demographic position of the Ukrainian population got strengthened, even though its number decreased as well (from roughly 3,273,000 in 1939 to 2,539,000 in 1945, with the remaining Slavonic ethnic groups being yet included in the latter number). The percentage share of the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia increased from 62.1% to 74.6% of the total (Grabowski, 2009, p. 33). The later repatriation of the Polish population brought also complete de-Polonisation of Eastern Galicia.

Situation was entirely different on the territories incorporated to the Belarussian SSR and the Lithuanian SSR. Here, repatriation encompassed mainly

an from Wrocław (Hryciuk, 1999). It is according to his assessment that 40 to 60 thousand Poles were killed.

urban population and the persons threatened by repressions from the side of the NKVD. The Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Belarusian conflicts were sporadic and did not have a more important general influence on decisions associated with repatriation. The rural population of the Vilna region did not cede to the repatriation call. On these areas Polish population clearly dominated. Those people felt less threatened and were largely convinced that the Soviet occupation is only transitory.

The first transports with the repatriates came to Poland already in the second half of 1944. These were the persons resettled from the former south-eastern Poland, that is – from the western districts of the Ukrainian SSR. In this first period, 117,200 persons came to Poland. In view of the fact that the front still stood across the territory of Poland, this group found themselves in very hard conditions. It was only in the second half of 1945, after Germans were pushed away from the Polish lands and the new western border of Poland was established, that wide possibilities for settling opened up.

In connection with the agreements signed on both respective sides, 1,736,000 persons applied for repatriation as of 1 July 1946 in the three republics bordering upon Poland, that is – Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. Of them, 1,259,000 persons were allowed to leave. Thus, approximately 500,000 persons, despite having applied for repatriation to Poland, remained in their locations of residence. The highest share of repatriates among those registered for repatriation occurred in Ukraine (96.0%). This was largely influenced by the previously mentioned terror that the Polish population suffered from the side of the Ukrainian nationalist groupings, which were active at that time. In the Belarusian republic of 470,000 persons having applied 274,200 actually left. The share of the repatriates was even lower in Lithuania (of 445,000 registered only 197,200 went to Poland) (Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M., 2005, p. 159).

In the framework of the repatriation action, 742,600 persons came to Poland in 1945, of whom 511,900 from the Ukrainian SSR, 135,700 from the Belarusian SSR, 73,000 from the Lithuanian SSR, and 22,100 from other Soviet republics. In the subsequent year, 1946, the flow of repatriates was smaller, amounting to 640,000 persons, of whom 158,400 from the Ukrainian SSR, 136,400 from the Belarusian SSR, 123,400 from the Lithuanian SSR, and 221,700 from other Soviet republics. In the following years repatriation was marginal and encompassed only individual persons. Altogether, within the framework of the official repatriation action, 1,518,000 persons came to Poland (see Table III.22).

The scholar, who dealt in a particular manner with the problems of the post-war repatriation of the Polish population from the USSR, is J. Czerniakiewicz (1987, 2005, 2007). His numerous studies contain detailed statistical information, concerning not only the number of the repatriates, but also their geographical origins and professional structure. These data confirm that the Soviet authorities were interested in the de-Polonisation of the bigger towns and the emigration of persons, who openly admitted their loyalty towards the Polish statehood. The attitude was different with respect to other groups of Polish population. The same author considered, as well, the political conditioning, influ-

encing the rate of the repatriation action and the way of its technical realisation. Hence, there is no need of presenting again the materials that are already known. For general orientation only the statistical information shall be provided on the geographical origins of the population repatriated to Poland. This population inhabited until the war a vast territory situated between the Carpathians in the South and the river Dvina in the North, and coexisted for several centuries with Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Jews, and Russians.

Table III.22. Repatriation of Polish population from the Soviet Union to Poland in the years 1944–1949

Period of repatriation	Numbers of repatriates from:				
	Ukrainian SSR	Belarusian SSR	Lithuanian SSR	other republics	totals
1944	117,212	–	–	–	117,212
1945	511,877	135,654	73,042	22,058	724,631
1946	158,435	136,419	123,443	221,717	640,014
1947–1949	150	2,090	674	15,215	18,126
Totals	787,674	274,163	197,156	258,990	1,517,983

Source: Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M., (2005, p. 159).

The author quoted emphasised the aspect, which was in most accounts and studies neglected, namely the fact that the resettlement of Polish population had in each of the Soviet republics a different specificity. The authorities of each of these republics had a different attitude towards the issue of repatriation of Poles. It was obvious that the officers of the republican and local level had to implement the agreements between Moscow and Warsaw. Yet, the republican authorities in Kiev, Minsk and Vilna, and especially those at the local level, represented their own standing on this issue and frequently tried to realise these own precepts. In Belarus and Lithuania this consisted in minimisation of the scale of repatriation by making difficult, delaying, or even blocking the emigration. This was, in fact, an easy task in view of the shortage of transport means. Local Poles were treated as Catholicised Belarusians or Polish-speaking Lithuanians. Their own declarations as to their nationality were not accounted for. In addition, it was also simply difficult for the local Poles to make the decision of leaving their “small homelands”.

The attitude of the Ukrainian side was, however, quite different. They were interested in complete de-Polonisation of the former Polish territories. At the same time, settling was expected of the Ukrainian population, resettled from Poland, for whom places of residence were needed. The continuing Polish-Ukrainian conflict made unstable the political situation in the western districts of Ukraine, which was anyway quite complex. Polish population, fearing extermination from the side of the nationalist Ukrainian underground would leave their places of residence, go to the nearest railway stations and wait for

weeks with their modest belongings for the possibility of being evacuated to Poland.⁵⁶

Hence, the existing political and demographic conditions caused that the highest number of Poles left the areas, which became a part of the Ukrainian SSR. This was mainly the Polish population from the former voivodships of Lwów, Tarnopol and Stanisławów, that is – the areas of the historical Galicia. The western part of Ukraine was divided into the repatriation districts, from which 787,700 Poles were sent to Poland, including 124,700 from the district of Lwów, 105,000 from the district of Czortków, 83,000 from Tarnopol, 75,900 from Stanisławów, 48,600 from Drohobycz, 30,100 from Sambor, 19,000 from Stryj, 19,000 from Złoczów, 17,900 from Kamionka Strumiłowa, 13,200 from Rawa Ruska, 13,000 from Chodorów, and 10,800 from Brody. Much less Poles came from Volhynia. Transports from the district of Równe brought to Poland 71,900 repatriates, from Łuck – 59,400, from Włodzimierz – 26,500, from Krzemieniec – 22,000, from Kowel – 20,700, from Dubno – 16,500 (Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M., 2005, p. 167). Repatriation did not apply to Poles from Ukraine, who had before the war Soviet citizenship, concentrated in the areas of Żytomierz, Berdyczów, Kamieniec Podolski and Płoskirów. An exception was made for the Poles from the region of Bukowina. Until 1940 they had had the Romanian citizenship. After northern Bukowina had been incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR, Soviet citizenship was imposed upon them. Persons of Polish nationality were, however, granted the repatriation rights. Thus, from the district of Czerniowce 10,500 persons, declaring Polish origin, were sent to Poland.

According to the official documentation, repatriation from Belarus encompassed approximately 274,000 former Polish citizens. In terms of individual repatriation districts, this total was composed of 51,000 persons from the district of Grodno, 46,400 from Mołodeczno, 33,800 from Baranowicze, 27,700 from Brześć, 26,700 from Głębokie, 21,400 from Wołkowysk, 19,400 from Słonim, 19,100 from Pińsk, 13,300 from Bereza Kartuska, 8,800 from Prużana, and 6,600 from Nowogródek (Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M., 2005, p. 165). These numbers of repatriates were not fully correlated with the numbers, and

⁵⁶ Conditions, in which Polish population was being resettled to Poland from the USSR, were dramatic. Even the journey alone would last frequently about a fortnight. Many of the transported persons died of exhaustion and frost. The evidence is provided, in particular, by the documents referred to in the study, devoted to this problem (Ciesielski, 1999). Let us quote one of them, from October 1945, prepared by the Health Department of the Provincial Office in Rzeszów: "Within the boundaries of our voivodship there are 16 trains with the repatriates from the East and from the South, which already for a longer time, namely 2–3 weeks, stand at various stations, without any hope for continuing the journey. The total number of repatriates in these trains is more than 10,000 persons. In the cars (open-air lorries!) there is also livestock... Food rations, supplied to the repatriates are insufficient. What PUR and Polish Red Cross are able together of supplying them with, is equivalent to much less than 1,000 calories per day per person! Cattle do not get any foodstuff... People are emaciated and ask to be shot, for they cannot live longer in such conditions. High percentage psychologically broke down. Health status is miserable. People die without adequate medical aid, this being the effect of the fact that physicians do not dispose of pharmaceuticals, nor of dressing materials, and, given the general exhaustion of the people, this makes a fatal prognostication" (Ciesielski, 1999, p. 34).

especially with the distribution, of the Polish population. Repatriation occurred to a relatively lower extent in the area of Grodno, where Poles dominated, while it took place to a higher extent from the areas, where Poles were less numerous and dispersed among the Belarusians. This was understandable, since they felt less safe on such areas. That is why close to 80% of Poles left the region of Polesie, while in the belt between Grodno and Lida the majority of Polish Catholics did not opt for repatriation. The latter areas featured the domination of the Catholic population, and Catholicism on these areas was traditionally associated with Polish nationality. Not feeling the cultural, and especially the religious isolation, they would wait for a change in the geopolitical setting. On the other hand, the Belarusian authorities hoped for their gradual Sovietisation and Belaruthenisation. In the next population census of 1959 still a clear majority of those people declared Polish nationality.

The attitude of the Lithuanian side towards the repatriation of Poles was more complex. On the one hand they feared the depopulation of the eastern part of Lithuania (region of Vilna), while on the other – they aimed at the Lithuanisation of Vilna and its surroundings. Simultaneous realisation of these two opposing objectives was hard to achieve. Yet, Lithuanians managed to de-Polonise their capital city. This was possible owing to the fact that 107,600 Poles left Vilna. Repatriation from the rural areas was relatively limited and thus the surroundings of Vilna preserved the Polish character. The numbers of Poles, having come from the particular districts, were, in the decreasing order, as follows: 12,000 from the district of Rzesza, 10,100 from Wilejka, 7,600 from Jaszuny, 6,500 from Troki, 6,500 from Podbrodzie, 6,300 from Niemenczyn, 6,000 from Szumsk, 5,800 from Landwarów, 5,700 from Rudziszki, 5,600 from Dukszty, and 5,400 from Święciany (Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M., 2005, p. 163). There was a dispute between the Polish and Lithuanian sides, concerning the admission to repatriation of the persons of Polish nationality, who had lived before the war on the territory of the sovereign Republic of Lithuania, with capital in Kaunas, and had, therefore, Lithuanian citizenship. They were allowed to leave on the basis of exceptional, individually issued permissions. A similar formal issue concerned Polish minority concentrated around Dyneburg (Daugavpils) in Latvia. They were not granted the repatriation rights.

The central Soviet authorities agreed, on the other hand, to apply the repatriation mechanism to the former Polish citizens, who got dispersed due to war across the entire territory of the USSR. In the years 1945–48 approximately 259,000 Poles and Jews took advantage of this possibility. Conform to the agreement, the biggest number of Poles returned from the Russian FSSR – 62,200 persons. The numbers of Poles, having come back from other republics were lower – e.g. 32,100 from Uzbek SSR and 11,500 from Kyrgyz SSR (Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M., 2005, pp. 168–169). The consecutive wave of repatriation from the USSR took place in the period after 1956.

Side by side with official repatriation there was a movement to Poland of the individual migrants. We have mentioned already before the Polish refugees from Volhynia and partly from Podole, who fled for fear of extermination from the side

of the nationalist Ukrainian formations – 200,000 persons having come to the General Governorship in the years 1942–1943. At the turn of 1945 additional 100,000 refugees made their way to the ethnically Polish areas. Besides, the 1st Polish Army, formed in the Soviet Union, of some 100,000 soldiers and officers, entered the territory of Poland. This army was largely composed of Poles having inhabited the eastern lands of the 2nd Commonwealth. There were also a relatively high number of returns of the Poles originating from the eastern lands, who found themselves on the territory of Germany during the war. These were primarily the persons deported to work or the POWs. They did not return to their home areas, but remained in Poland on their way back. It is estimated that this group was composed of some 200,000 persons. This group was accompanied by the few of those who left the Soviet Union with General Władysław Anders, and through Persia, Middle East and Italy, reached Poland. According to K. Piesowicz (1988a, p. 55) around 500,000 persons originating from the eastern borderlands came to Poland in the ways different than the official repatriation action. S. Banasiak (1963, p. 151) performed a more accurate calculation of the number of repatriates. Thus, in his opinion the total number of repatriates from the East amounted to 2,207,716 (Fig. III.11). It can be judged that this precise calculation is close to the actual numbers. The population census carried out in 1950 reported 2,136,000 persons, whose residence on September 1st, 1939, was located on the areas lost to the Soviet Union. Numerous Poles from the Eastern Borderlands did not return to Poland from the West and dispersed across the globe.

Among the broadly understood repatriates, relocated from the East, the persons of Polish nationality dominated. Approximately 136,500 Jews came as well. Half of the latter migrated during the next two years to Palestine. The groups of repatriates of other nationalities were quite marginal⁵⁷. The next action of repatriation of Poles from the Soviet Union took place in the years 1956–1959. At that time, 249,000 repatriates came to Poland, of whom 101,100 from the Belarusian SSR, 76,000 from the Ukrainian SSR, and 46,000 from the Lithuanian SSR. Soon after this repatriation action, in 1959, a population census was carried out in the Soviet Union. This census reported 539,000 Poles in the Belarusian SSR, 363,000 in the Ukrainian SSR and 230,000 in the Lithuanian SSR. Thus, in these three republics bordering with Poland, altogether 1,132,000 persons declared Polish nationality in 1959. These were the persons, who, for various reasons, were not included in the repatriation.

⁵⁷ An official “repatriation” action, besides the one of ethnic Poles, from the territories having belonged to the 2nd Commonwealth, was applied to the Czech colons, inhabiting Volhynia. On the basis of the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement of July 10th, 1946, the resettlement action was carried out, which lasted between 30 January 1947 and 10 May 1947. In the effect of this action 27,700 Czechs, citizens of pre-war Poland, left Volhynia for Czechoslovakia. They were settled in the areas of Żatca and Podbořany, from where Germans, the so-called *Sudeten Deutsche*, who had been Czechoslovak citizens before the war, were relocated to Germany (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 233).

III.11. Return to Poland of the population deported by the Nazi occupants and reemigration from the West

When considering the movements of the population on the areas occupied by the Reich we provided the estimates for the scale of relocations to work in Germany. The complete military defeat of the Nazis and the entering of the allied armies into the territory of Germany, as well as establishment of a new geopolitical situation allowed for the return of the deported to the country. The matter, though, was not so simple for the deportees. The fact that Poland fell under the Soviet domination, and that the authorities in Poland had been established by victorious Stalin made the decision of return more difficult. On the other hand, administration of the new Poland undertook a propaganda action, calling for the return to the home country. The deported population, who found themselves on the areas liberated by the western allies, became the object of a two-sided propaganda, from the Polish government in exile and from the administration in Warsaw. The two sides had different aims and used different arguments. Nowadays, looking back from a sufficiently far historical perspective, we can state that despite the patriotic rhetoric, used by the delegates of the government in exile, the blocking of the return to Poland was decidedly harmful for the demographically damaged country. It should be added that the western allied governments were interested in the return of Poles to their homeland and collaborated on that issue closely with the administration in Warsaw. It is very difficult to establish a general demographic balance and estimate with a decent precision the number of Poles, who remained in Western Europe after the war. It is even more difficult to provide a statistical estimate of their later fates, since many of them never returned to Poland and dispersed across the globe. Only very rough assessments can be forwarded in this domain.

Polish literature of the subject reserves for the persons sent by force to work in Germany and returning to the home country the not too adequate term of “repatriates from the West” or, less frequently, “war repatriates”. The returns to Poland encompassed also the persons, who left Poland before September 1939 of their own will, looking for a job, and decided to come back to the homeland after the war. This group was referred to as “re-emigrants”.

Hence, the post-war return wave from the West to Poland encompassed quite a variety of population categories, namely:

- the demobilised soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces in the West, who fought against Germans side by side with the allies; in the final stage of war the strength of the Polish Armed Forces in the West was close to 250,000 officers and privates;
- the prisoners of the Nazi concentration camps;
- the Polish POWs from the September 1939 campaign, the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, etc.;
- the persons deported during occupation to work in Germany;

- civilians, who fled from the country for fear of the German or Soviet terror;
- the former job migrants, who had left Poland before the outbreak of the World War II.

It is not possible to present the scale of returns to Poland for each of the population categories mentioned. The statistical documentation makes it possible to only separate from the general evidence of the returning persons the “re-emigrants”, but even in this domain quite significant divergences exist. Ultimately, the entire classification of the return flows was not fully unambiguous, because the cases were known of persons being simultaneously “repatriates” and “re-emigrants”.

The largest groups of the persons returning were those sent to work in Germany and the Polish POWs interned by the *Wehrmacht*. It is estimated that around 400,000 of those people remained at the end of war on the area of the Reich to the East of the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers. After the decisions taken in Potsdam these areas became an integral part of the Polish state. So, the respective persons were not included in the repatriation reporting. It can be said that they did not return to Poland but that Poland came to them, encompassed them with its new boundaries, and brought their citizenship back to them. Many of them, anyway, did not have where to return any more, because they had frequently been the residents of the lands that Poland lost in the East, or their dwellings in central Poland were destroyed. They stayed, therefore, on place, and became the first settlers on the so-called Regained Lands.

Approximately 700,000 persons, sent to work in Germany during the occupation and the POWs, were in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany and in Austria at the instant of the end of war. Immediately after the military operations terminated, in the first half of 1945, half of them returned to Poland. They were not included in the repatriation reporting, because the newly established Polish-German border was not yet under the supervision of the Polish border guards. The remaining Poles left the Soviet occupation zones and returned to Poland in the second half of 1945. At the same time, also without any registration, more than 100,000 Poles returned to Poland from the American, British and French occupation zones. They were taken care of by the UNRRA, this organisation having adopted the term of “displaced persons” (DPs, or, in the Polish colloquial expression, the “dipis”) for the civilians that remained under its wardship.

On the basis of the work by K. Kersten (1974, p. 207) we can determine in an approximate manner the numbers of Poles in the particular zones of western Germany and the course of their repatriation to Poland. Thus, according to the data as of 28 July 1945 there were:

- in the British zone of Germany (Ruhr, Rheinland, Westfalen, Hannover, Oldenbourg, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Friesen) 435,388 DPs and 106,438 POWs;
- in the American zone (Bavaria, a part of Württemberg, Hessen, Hessen-Nassau, Bremen): 157,258 DPs and 24,722 POWs;
- in the French zone (Saarland, Rhein-Pfalz, northern Rheinland, Baden, a part of Württemberg): 31,477 DPs and 584 POWs;
- in the camps not positioned according to zones: 149,259 DPs and 7,400 POWs.

Thus, according to these data, there were at the end of war altogether 912,526 Polish citizens on the western territories of Germany, most of them of Polish nationality. One should add to this number the ones in Austria – 36,000 Polish DPs, conform to an underestimation, and those, who were not accounted for in the official statistics. It can therefore be supposed that there were around 1.2 million Poles in western Germany and in Austria in the middle of 1945.

An important proportion of those people were located in the transition camps, established by the allies. As many as 427 such camps were established. The inmates of these camps were primarily the ones, who had been in Germany on forced labour, since the POWs would to a large extent disperse across Western Europe or were returning to Poland on their own. According to the data as of September 1945, there were 897,033 Poles in these camps (see Table III.23).

The returns of Poles from Germany had initially an entirely unorganised character. After the capitulation of Germany and termination of the military activities thousands of Poles moved eastward in order to reach their home areas. They were primarily returning from the territories under Soviet control. According to the rough estimates from that time until the end of August 1945 approximately 800,000 persons returned, of whom 93,592 from the western zones. These data, though, did not account for the spontaneous repatriation. In the subsequent months of 1945 altogether 273,750 repatriates were expedited jointly from the American, British and French zones (Table III.24).

The organised repatriation of Polish population was undertaken in the effect of the agreement among the allies signed in September in Berlin⁵⁸. It started with a delay with respect to the envisaged deadlines. The first transport from the American zone left on 17 September 1945, from the British zone – on 13 October 1945, and from the French zone only in November of the same year. Thus, in October of that year 127,308 Poles were sent back to Poland in an organised manner (73,733 from the American zone and 53,735 from the British zone), in November – 106,393 (23,388 from the American zone, 74,005 from the British zone, and 9,000 from the French zone), and in December – 40,049 (5,851 from the American zone, 28,265 from the British zone, and 5,933 from the French zone) (see Kersten, 1974, p. 213).

⁵⁸ Carrying out of an adequately effective repatriation and re-emigration of Poles was a difficult logistic task. It was carried out immediately after the war, when the transport network was badly damaged, and Polish authorities did not dispose of the appropriate financial means. Given that there were quite ample housing resources in the form of dwellings left by the relocated German population, settling of the newcomers in their new places of residence was, on the other hand, only a technical and organisational issue. For purposes of carrying out this complex undertaking the so-called Polish Repatriation Missions (PMRs in Polish acronym) were established within the framework of the Office for the Repatriation of Polish Citizens from the West. These Missions were most active in Germany, namely in Berlin, Leipzig, Frankfurt on Main, in Bestad and in Bad Salzufen. These missions had their field offices in Munich, Heidelberg, Hannover, Lübeck and Baden-Baden. Similarly, Polish Repatriation Mission in Austria, with the seat in Vienna, functioned by the intermediary of the field offices in Salzburg-Linz and in Innsbruck. New Missions were successively established, in Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, The Netherlands and Switzerland. Independently of them, the Polish Military Missions were functioning, whose task was to organise the repatriation of the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces. Simultaneously, special posts were created at the Polish western and southern boundaries for admission of the repatriates and re-emigrants (Sula, 2002, pp. 16–17).

Table III.23. Distribution of the Polish DPs in the zones of western part of Germany and Austria as of September 1945

Occupation zone								
American			British			French		
province	number of camps	number of persons	province	number of camps	number of persons	province	number of camps	number of persons
Baden	9	17,426	Düsseldorf	19	19,931	Baden	15	21,404
Bayerische Ostmark	37	37,773	Essen	18	18,661	Hessen Nassau	4	5,349
Franken	17	44,950	Köln Aachen	15	19,949	Moselland	20	30,109
Hessen Nassau	9	33,704	Ost Hannover	24	60,055	Tirol Geralberg	1	?
Kurhessen	10	6,119	Schleswig Holstein	25	105,970	Westmark	11	13,156
Mainfranken	9	83,618	Süd Hannover Braunschweig	34	104,435	Württemberg Hohenzollern	10	12,113
München Oberbayern	15	26,443	Weser-Ems	29	72,067			
Oberdonau	4	32,071	Westphalen Nord	39	63,395			
Schwaben	8	5,406	Westphalen Süd	21	26,933			
Württemberg Hohenzollern	21	37,701	Hamburg	2	686			
			Kärnten	1	437			
Totals	139	325,701		227	489,619		61	82,131

Source: Kersten (1974, p. 212).

In view of technical difficulties this repatriation lasted long and terminated in principle only at the end of 1948. It encompassed altogether 865,637 persons (see Table III.25).

On the basis of the detailed documentation, which was put together by K. Kersten, it can be concluded that at the instant of the end of war, there were close to 2.5 million Polish citizens on the territory of the German Reich within its boundaries of August 1939. Of those, in an organised manner 1,642,500 persons repatriated to Poland, most of them in 1945 – 1,117,300. In the subsequent years repatriation would take on smaller dimensions – in 1946: 387,400, in 1947: 101,500, in 1948: 24,200, in 1949: 9,100, in 1950: 3,000. It is generally acknowledged that a clear majority, namely more than 2.1 million of the former workers and POWs, transported during the war to Germany, ultimately found their permanent place of residence within the boundaries of post-war Poland. Many of them, though, did not return to their previous places of residence. Having learned of the shifts

of the boundaries, and the possibility of settling on the former German territories, as well as, often, of the incorporation of their home region into the USSR, they would take the dwellings or farms previously owned by the relocated Germans.

Table III.24. Repatriation of Poles from the western zones of Germany in 1945

Months of 1945	Occupation zone			
	American	British	French	totals
July–September				93,592
October	73,733	53,575		127,308
November	23,388	74,005	9,000	106,393
December	5,851	28,265	5,933	40,049
October–December	102,972	155,845	14,933	273,750

Source: Kersten (1974, p. 213).

Table III.25. Repatriation from the western zones of Germany and from Austria to Poland

Dates	Numbers of repatriates				
	from the American zone	from the French zone	from the British zone	from Austria	totals
Until 1.01.1946	196,585	14,933	155,845	59,308	426,671
1.01–31.12.1946	130,605	26,517	200,816	9,525	367,463
1.01–30.06.1947	26,258	3,563	12,625	2,151	44,597
1.07.1947–31.08.1948	10,731	1,437	13,818	920	26,906
Totals	364,179	46,450	383,104	71,904	865,637

Source: Kersten (1974, pp. 216–217).

It is by no means easy to determine the number of Poles, who decided not to come back to Poland and stayed in the West. They represented various categories of the displaced persons. Quite a high share of intelligentsia and people with anti-communist views did not accept the new authorities, imposed by Stalin and were afraid of repressions after the potential return. Polish population, originating from the eastern territories, lost by Poland, faced a difficult dilemma, as well. Many of them expected a new war to break out between the allies and withheld the final decision. According to a rough estimate some 300,000 Poles, who were on the territory of Germany when the war ended, dispersed over the globe and never returned to Poland.

The synthesis here outlined did not account for the population of Polish nationality, who had had before the war the German citizenship. These were mainly the representatives of the pre-war job emigration, dating even from before the World

War I, who were primarily concentrated in the Ruhr Basin. Relatively few of them returned to Poland. Literature of the subject contains quite diverse estimates of their number. Usually, this number is estimated at roughly a dozen or so thousand of the so-called re-emigrants.

On the territory, which was incorporated into Poland, there were, as mentioned already, approximately 400,000 Polish workers at the instant the war ended. They were mainly employed on German farms. Having got acquainted with the local conditions, in the situation, when the German inhabitants were relocated, they would frequently take over the farms, on which they had previously worked. The cases occurred, when they would not return to their home locality, but, on the contrary, their families and relatives from somewhere deep in the old territory of Poland would join them in the new place of residence.

As a consequence of the military activities and the purposeful recruitment action, conducted by the Nazi authorities, numerous Polish citizens were, when the war ended, not only in Germany, but also in other European countries, which had been under Nazi occupation during the war. Thus, repatriation encompassed also Poles in France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, and in the Nordic countries. The biggest number of Poles returned in the post-war period to Poland from France. Those people have found themselves in France not only due to the war.

Approximately 470,000 Poles lived in north-eastern France at the end of the 1930s (*Atlas of Polish...*, 2001, p. 22). They were mainly coal miners with their families, working in the local collieries. They came from Poland during the inter-war period or had worked until the World War I in the Ruhr Basin and then, after 1918, moved to France. Among this large concentration of the Polish population propaganda action was started, appealing for the return to Poland. This propaganda brought certain tangible effects. This was due, in particular, to the fact that a significant proportion of Polish miners was under the influence of the French Communist Party and had a positive attitude towards the systemic changes, having taken place in post-war Poland.

After an appropriate agreement had been signed between Poland and France (on 28 February 1946) the return migration of Polish population started. According to the report from the National Repatriation Office, 59,777 re-emigrants came to Poland in the framework of organised transports (of whom 10,078 in 1946, 33,765 in 1947, 14,000 in 1948, and 1,934 in 1949). Transports, carrying miners from France, and partly from Belgium, were directed to Wałbrzych, and also in part to Zabrze (Sula, 2002, p. 155).

Poles, returning from France, did not only originate from the old job-related emigration. German authorities sent in the framework of the so-called *Frankreichaktion* 23,500 Poles to work in France. Already after the war several tens of thousands of Poles came to France from Germany. These were the workers, sent to forced labour, inmates of concentration camps, as well as POWs enrolled in *Wehrmacht*. Besides, there were 1,000 persons employed by the allies in the guard services. The number of Polish displaced persons in France was altogether estimated at around 100,000 persons. Most of them were concentrated in 26 camps, established around Verdun, Lyon, Toulouse and Paris. Repatriation

started in autumn 1945 and lasted until July 1946. Within the framework of this action 80,000 persons returned to Poland (Sula, 2002, p. 154).

Within the framework of the repatriation actions, concerning other countries, 18,711 persons returned to Poland from Denmark, Norway and Sweden, 12,361 from Italy, 3,312 from Belgium, 1,738 from The Netherlands, and 3,324 from Czechoslovakia. These returns, though, had a more individual character. A specific group of repatriates came from Yugoslavia. They were the descendants of Poles, who settled at the end of the 19th century in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In several organised transports, 15,200 persons came to Poland. They were settled in the vicinity of Bolesławiec in Lower Silesia. A group with a similar history came from Romania – 3,837 persons having lived in Bukovina before. Even from far-off Manchuria 784 Poles came. Until World War II they had lived in Harbin, where they settled, or were sent to, yet before the World War I or just after the Bolshevik revolution.

In May 1945, when the war ended, there were 249,000 officers and privates of the regular Polish armed forces in the West, stationed mainly in Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands and northern Germany (including 21,000 former POWs, liberated from the German camps). After gradual demobilisation, 105,000 repatriated to Poland. Many of these soldiers originated from the territories to the East of the Curzon line. That is why roughly 10,000 of them went to the Ukrainian SSR, Belarusian SSR or Lithuanian SSR. They were arrested and sent to labour camps in Siberia. Soldiers coming to new Poland were treated by the communist authorities with high degree of distrust. Repressions with respect to them had a selective character and affected in principle only a part of the officers. Still, as can be easily gathered from the numbers given, the majority of soldiers, at least in the first years after the war, especially the officers, decided to remain in the West. Like many others, they hoped for the conflict between the allies in a near future and the change of the geopolitical situation. British government gave them the possibility to stay and not make use of the right to repatriate. This possibility was not offered the Soviet citizens, who were in an obligatory manner, oftentimes in a brutal way, handed over to the Soviet authorities. Many of them were later on shot or sent to labour camps.

Polish Armed Forces in the West were gradually liquidated. In August-September of 1946 the Polish Resettlement Corps was established for the former military, having as its aim to prepare them to the work in civilian professions. Approximately 171,000 soldiers took advantage of this opportunity. The Corps functioned until October 1949. Special transports were organised and Poles were evacuated to Canada, Australia and other countries of the British Commonwealth. Most of the officers remained in the United Kingdom, where the Polish Government in Exile functioned continuously.⁵⁹

Many Poles did not decide to repatriate and remained abroad. These persons acquired the formal status of “refugees”. According to the official statistics 275,000

⁵⁹ Ultimately, after the repatriation, 157,000 Poles remained in the United Kingdom, according to the state as of 1949. A part of them emigrated thereafter to Canada and the number of the Polish population (mainly men) decreased by 1957 to 107,000 (Maryński, 1966, p. 125).

Poles refused to return home. By adding the persons, who were not accounted for in the international documentation, we arrive at the rough estimate of half a million Poles, who were forced by war to leave the homeland and remained in the countries of Western Europe. Many of them tried to, and moved, to Canada, US and Australia.

Besides the repatriation of the Polish citizens, who were forced to leave after September 1st, 1939, there was the already mentioned re-emigration of those Poles, who had departed before. This action did not bring all of the expected results. Thus, in particular, not even a symbolic return of the Poles living in the United States or Canada was achieved. Still, the appeal of the new government found a positive response in the form of return of some 200,000 “old” emigrants (Piesowicz, 1988a, p. 72).

An overall synthesis of the dimensions of the official repatriation and re-emigration was performed by K. Kersten (1974, p. 242). According to her calculations, repatriation from Germany between 1945 and 1950 encompassed 1,642,500 persons. Repatriation and re-emigration from other European countries encompassed 298,500 persons (in 1945: 141,800; in 1946: 84,400; in 1947: 58,700; in 1948: 12,000; in 1949: 1,400, and in 1950: 200 persons), and from outside of Europe – 8,000 persons of Polish nationality. Thus, not considering the “immigration” from the areas that had been incorporated into the USSR, 1,949,000 persons moved after the war to Poland from other European countries, mainly from Germany (Fig. III.11).

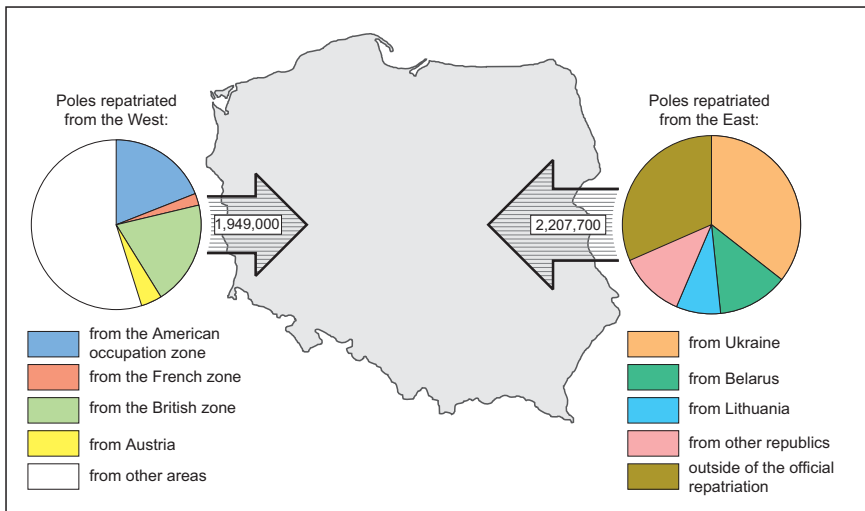


Fig. III.11. Repatriation and re-emigration of the Polish population to Poland from the West and East after the termination of the military activities

Source: own elaboration.

III.12. Deportations of the Polish and Ukrainian populations in the final stage of the war and in the post-war period into far areas of the Soviet Union

The eastern territories of the 2nd Commonwealth were occupied after June 1941 by the armed forces of the Third Reich, which have pushed back the Soviet army. On this ethnically highly mixed area the military structures of the Polish underground Home Army were established, subordinated to the legal Polish government, seated in London. The field offices of the civilian authorities were functioning, as well. In 1944, after the defeat of the *Wehrmacht*, the Soviet troops entered these territories again. Soviet authorities treated these territories as an integral part of the USSR and considered that all kinds of military or civilian organisations, not subordinated to Moscow, ought to be liquidated. At the same time, the detachments of the Home Army started the action "Storm" ("Burza"), directed against the retreating German army. In several instances local cooperation with the Soviet detachments would take place. This occurred primarily in the region of Vilna, where numerous and well organised Polish guerrilla troops were active, and in Volhynia, where the detachments of the 27th Division of the Home Army operated. After the passage of the Soviet-German front, Polish military formations were interned, with the soldiers having the possibility of enrolment into the Polish Army, formed in the USSR, commanded by General Zygmunt Berling. Those, who would not opt for such a possibility, were sent to POW camps and accused of anti-Soviet activity. In these camps, between 39,000 and 48,000 persons were kept, including approximately 17,000 soldiers of the Home Army. Thereafter, arrests and deportations far into the territory of the USSR started.

On the basis of the decision of L. Beria of 22 February 1945, interning of the "dangerous elements" present behind the lines of the Ist, IInd and IIIrd Byelorussian Front and Ist Ukrainian Front, was started. This concerned mainly East Prussia and Upper Silesia. The number of the interned persons increased quickly, and on 23 February 1945 it was at 35,988, on 3 March – at 58,318, on 9 March – at 68,680, on 19 March – at 75,759, and on 15 April – at 215,540. Among the interned there were 138,200 Germans, 36,660 Poles, 27,880 citizens of the USSR, 3,200 Hungarians, 1,130 Slovaks and 390 Italians. The majority of them, namely 148,540, were transported deeper into the USSR, and 62,000 persons were transferred to the POW camps. During this action some 5,000 of the captured persons were killed or died (Polyan, 2001, pp. 212–213).

According to the studies, carried out by the historians from the Russian organisation of "Memorial", on the areas situated to the East of the Curzon line, in the years 1944–1947 between 40,000 and 50,000 Poles were interned and deported (Zwolski, 2008, p. 41). Among those deported were the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces, who fought against Germans in the West and immediately after the war returned to their homes within the eastern Borderlands – 4,500 of them were deported to the East.

Arrests and deportations were taking place, as well, on the territory to the West of the Curzon line. Starting with the middle of April 1944 the detachments of NKVD deported to the labour and other camps 22,724 persons, of whom from Białystok 3,271 persons, from Przemyśl 1,569, from Ciechanów 7,878, from Działdowo 3,365. Conform to the report from Beria, meant for Stalin, there were 25,000 Poles in prisons and camps, including 8,000 soldiers of the Home Army. Besides, 32,000 Poles were arrested, who had been the soldiers of the former German army (Myśliński, 2005, pp. 34, 42, 64).

Additional forces of the NKVD (the 64th Division of the Internal Forces of NKVD) were assigned for assisting the new communist authorities in Poland, which were treated by the majority of Poles as usurpers. As the line of front moved westwards, in summer 1944, the arrests and internment affected to the West of the Curzon line approximately 12,000–13,000 soldiers of the Home Army and the civilian underground, who were transported afterwards deep into the territory of the USSR⁶⁰. Besides, the NKVD and the military counter-intelligence organisation *Smersh* deported from the territory of Poland around 15,000–20,000 persons, mainly from Pomerania and Greater Poland (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 83). After Polish Pomerania had been taken over by the Soviet army, arrests of Poles and Germans started. They were put into the camps and prisons of the NKVD in Grudziądz, Ciechanów and Działdowo. Thereafter, they were transported to the USSR. This deportation encompassed 23,170 of the arrested, of whom 2,013, i.e. 8.7%, died during the journey (Golon, 2009, pp. 298–299). Against the scale of the deportations of that time these numbers were not high, but their political significance was much higher. The data quoted were subject to verification in the study of A. Skrzypek (2002), see Table III.26.

In addition, organs of the NKVD started also arresting Germans and Poles after having entered Upper Silesia. This concerned mainly coal miners and industrial workers. The total number of the persons interned and then transported to the Soviet mines was estimated at around 90,000, with the number of Poles in this group roughly equal 25,000–30,000 (Węgrzyn, 2008, p. 99). The attempts of the Polish authorities to bring them back home were ineffective for a long time. Until September 1949 only 5,603 deported miners returned to Poland.

Compared to what had been happening in the years 1939–1941, the post-war deportations had a moderate dimension. Within the territory of the eastern Borderlands of the 2nd Commonwealth the main repressions were not any

⁶⁰ Arrests and deportations were taking place in an extremely unstable political situation. Anti-communist guerrilla troops were functioning, who effectively controlled large parts of the rural areas of eastern and central Poland up to the county level. Their total strength was in 1945 equal 80,300 armed soldiers, opposing the new authorities, in 1946 – 60,300, in 1947 – 46,000, and in 1948 – 13,200. Losses on the side of the authorities amounted to close to 20,000 dead. These were the soldiers of the “Polish people’s army”, militiamen, communist party activists and many persons killed accidentally (including several hundred Jews). Around 8,000 military of the anti-communist underground were killed. The demographic losses are estimated at altogether 30,000 persons (Tazbir, 1980, p. 761). This conflict, in which both sides were engaged with high determination, stimulated migration processes. Many persons from eastern and central Poland moved to the Northern and Western Lands, incorporated into Poland. There, in a new social environment, they were less exposed to persecutions and harassment for their earlier political attitudes and activities.

more directed against Poles, but against Ukrainians and Lithuanians, accused of nationalism and anti-Sovietism. The authorities of the NKVD had, after all, somewhat limited possibilities of operation on the territory of post-war Poland.

Table III.26. Numbers of Poles arrested by the organs of NKVD in the framework of the action of so-called purification of the hinterland of the military fronts

Soviet front	Until:						
	January 22nd	January 25th	February 17th	March 9th	March 16th	March 28th	April 11th
II Baltic	–	–	–	22	27	28	28
I Belarusian	429	463	4,926	9,038	9,602	11,185	12,281
II Belarusian	76	302	10,016	15,105	16,510	18,115	19,353
III Belarusian	–	309	663	814	847	900	1,011
I Ukrainian	190	254	240	990	2,107	2,437	2,782
IV Ukrainian	–	–	–	1,643	1,720	2,107	2,791
Totals	695	1,330	15,845	27,612	30,813	34,772	38,246

Source: Skrzypek (2002, p. 47).

When considering the movements of population on the areas to the East of the Curzon line, we concentrate our attention in this study on Polish and Jewish population. The forced movements of the Ukrainian population are treated more marginally. Still, certain issues require recalling. Ukrainians residing to the West of river Zbrucz had been Polish citizens in real terms until 1939, and in formal terms until 1945. Soviet citizenship was imposed on them first in 1939, and then again in 1944, after the Soviet army marched in once more.

Conform to the agreement, signed in Moscow on August 16th, 1945, the course of the new Polish-Soviet boundary was established. The associated removal of the Polish population to Poland was in this connection a secondary and obvious matter for the authorities on the Kremlin. The primary task consisted in the liquidation of the actively functioning Ukrainian nationalist organisations. Ukrainian population was inimical towards the Soviet administration. They treated Soviets as new occupants, known already from the years 1939–1941. The detachments of UPA, which had been formed under the German occupation not only did not put down their arms, but to the contrary – initiated active guerrilla warfare. In response, the troops of NKVD started brutal pacifications and repressions, directed not so much against the guerrilla detachments as against the civilian population, which supported the Ukrainian independence fighters.

In order to liquidate local support to the Ukrainian military formations, Soviet authorities used the well-proven method of deportations and resettlements. First transports set out in May 1944 with altogether 5,000 persons, and until the end of that years this number increased to 13,300. In the next year, 1945, the number of deported Ukrainians was 17,600. Entire families, suspect of

collaborating with the anti-Soviet underground, were deported, mainly to Siberia and to the Arkhangelsk district. In the subsequent year (1946) the intensity of the deportation action was significantly limited, due to technical reasons.

Situation in the western districts of Ukraine did not improve. Strong guerrilla forces were still functioning, under the leadership of the commander of UPA, Roman Shukhevych, and liquidated successively the communist party activists. That is why in October 1947 the resettlement action was renewed. It was kept secret until the very last moment. During just a couple of days 26,682 Ukrainian families were deported (76,192 persons). There were 18,866 elderly men, 35,132 women and 22,174 children among those deported (Ciesielski et al., 2004, p. 292). These proportions indicate clearly that this repressive action was aimed at the civilian population. Conditions were very difficult both during transportation and in the places of destination. This brought about high mortality. It is estimated that in the years 1944–1950 around 11% of the deported died.

These drastic methods, though, were not sufficient for putting down the anti-Soviet guerrilla. After a short break the deportation action was renewed again in 1949, and then continued until 1952. According to the scrupulous data of the NKVD, altogether 203,662 persons were deported, classified as “OUN-supporters”, “Banderists”⁶¹, or other categories of the enemies of the Soviet rule. It can be easily deduced from the numerous lists of the deported, that they were first of all women and children, for young men were usually shot dead on place. The deported were mostly brought to Siberia, where they remained until the time of the amnesty, proclaimed by Khrushchev in the framework of the so-called de-Stalinisation (Ciesielski et al., 2004, p. 305).

Similar political conditions existed after the Soviet army marched into Lithuania, where, as well, during several post-war years the independence-oriented guerrilla did function (the so-called “forest brothers”). In order to subdue the country and terrorise the population, mass deportations were started. They encompassed mainly the Lithuanians and, a much lower degree, Poles inhabiting the region of Vilna. The pacification actions were conducted primarily on the areas, which in the inter-war period had not belonged to Poland, and so their consideration exceeds the frames of the study here presented.

The situation in the Belarusian SSR was more stable. Deportations had not an organised and mass character. For introduction of the requisite degree of terror it was sufficient to arrest and shoot the so-called collaborationists, that is – persons accused of collaboration with the German occupation authorities. Besides, former members of the Polish underground Home Army or soldiers fighting against Germans in the Polish armed forces were also the objects of persecutions and killings.

⁶¹ Stepan A. Bandera – extreme nationalist Ukrainian activist, held responsible for the ethnic purges against Poles in Volhynia and elsewhere in Ukraine, established an own political and military organisation by breaking away from OUN. Killed by an agent of KGB in Munich in 1950.

III.13. Post-war movements of the Ukrainian and Belarusian population

Determination of the eastern boundary of Poland on the basis of the Curzon line was not only meant to legalise the territorial acquisitions of the Soviet Union, but also to ultimately solve the growing ethnic problems, existing between Poland and its eastern neighbours. In connection with this, an agreement was signed on 9 September 1944 between the Soviet government and the PKWN, representing the new authorities in Poland, on the mutual exchange of population. Conform to the stipulations of the agreement, the Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Belarusian, Russian and Lithuanian populations living on the territory of Poland in its new boundaries were to be relocated to the Soviet Union, while persons of Polish nationality living on the eastern side of the Curzon line were to be moved to Poland. An integral part of the agreement was constituted by the deal on the resettlement of the Ukrainians and the so-called Ruthenians from Poland and Poles from the Ukrainian SSR. The intention of the agreement was to liquidate the basis for the tensions and conflicts between the two nations in a freewill, but at the same time ultimate (which was apparently inconsistent) manner.

The number of Ukrainians, who lived on the Polish side, was initially estimated as equal between 493,800 and 546,200 (Skrzynecki, 1988, p. 4). The actual number of the Ukrainian population (including the Lemko population inhabiting the northern slopes of the Carpathians between the river Poprad and upper San) was higher. The estimates in this domain are quite divergent, although determination of the approximate numbers of population is not very difficult. The Ukrainians living in south-eastern Poland were either of Eastern Orthodox or of Greek-Catholic religion. Within this area national identification was associated with religious denomination, and the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church fully identified themselves with the Polish nationality. Ukrainians lived in southern parts of four counties of the Cracow voivodship (Gorlice, Jasło, Nowy Sącz, Nowy Targ), in nine western counties of the former voivodship of Lwów, these counties now belonging to Poland (Brzozów, Jarosław, Krosno, Lesko, Lubaczów, Łańcut, Przemyśl, Przeworsk, Sanok), and six eastern counties of the voivodship of Lublin (Biała Podlaska, Biłgoraj, Chełm, Hrubieszów, Włodawa). All these counties were inhabited, in accordance with the census of 1931, by 2,272,800 persons, of whom 208,400 were of Orthodox religion and 398,100 were Greek Catholics. By subtracting the few Russians and Poles of Orthodox faith, and adding the dispersed Ukrainians, living in the remaining counties, situated farther West, we arrive at the rough number of more than 600,000 Ukrainians. Between 1931 and 1939, and then during the Nazi occupation this population featured high natural increase and its number approached 700,000 persons.

The resettlement action was supposed to end until February 1st, 1945, which turned out to be unrealistic. Until that day only 39,900 Ukrainians were deported.

The action was carried out slowly, not only in view of lack of transport means. The majority of Ukrainians preferred to stay on place, in their home villages. They were primarily peasants, owners of small farming plots. The most significant obstacle to the normalisation of the day-to-day living conditions resulted from the presence on these areas of the armed detachments of the UPA, supported by the local Ukrainian population. Some of these detachments had come from the areas situated to the East of the new boundary, established between Poland and the Ukrainian SSR. They would not only protect the local Ukrainian population, but also attack the militia posts as well as military garrisons, and terrorised local Polish population. Polish villages were burned down and their inhabitants exterminated. Simultaneously, on the very same areas Polish guerrilla groups were active, of anti-communist character, which, in retaliation, would attack Ukrainian villages and kill their inhabitants. Situation was, therefore, unstable, and made the planned resettlement quite difficult. Yet, despite of this, until August 15th, 1945, approximately 222,500 Ukrainians were resettled. Until that time the resettlement action was carried out in a relatively free-will manner. The Ukrainians leaving in its framework were those of more leftist views. A part of them did not feel secure in the Polish environment, and, besides, they would believe the Soviet propaganda, which promised good living conditions in the Ukrainian SSR.

In the subsequent stage, between August 15th, 1945, and December 1946, the principle of freewill resettlement was being violated quite decisively (Misiła, 1996, pp. 10–14). The respective operations were carried out by the regular detachments of the Polish army, which would surround individual Ukrainian villages and all of the inhabitants were directed to the evacuation points, from where they were transported towards the Polish-Soviet border. The abandoned villages were often destroyed on purpose, in order to make the return of their inhabitants impossible. Although efforts were made to carry out the resettlements in a possibly humanitarian manner, after all, numerous cases occurred of killings, with victims on both sides, since the guerrilla detachments of UPA opposed the resettlement action, as they were losing thereby their human and reserves and supply bases. Until July 5th, 1946, the number of Ukrainians, deported from three voivodships, situated in the south-eastern Poland amounted to 480,300 (see Table III.27).

In the second half of 1946 yet 8,300 Ukrainians left. These final movements had an unorganised character and resulted from the need of joining together the separated families. Polish side wished to prolong the repatriation agreement not so much in view of the unfinished resettlement of the Ukrainian population, but because there were at least 500,000 Poles still in the Ukrainian SSR, willing to come to Poland. Soviet authorities, though, did not consent to the extension of the mutual exchange of population. Thus, in the framework of the programmed at the top and then implemented resettlement plan 488,600 Ukrainians were resettled from Poland in the years 1944–1946. The entire action had a stage-wise character, as can be concluded from the statistical data, presented in Table III.28 (Pisuliński, 2009).

After the planned resettlement has been terminated, there still remained some 200 thousand Ukrainians in Poland. They concentrated mainly in south-eastern part of the region of Rzeszów, in the mountainous areas (150 thousand). The other ones were already dispersed across the territory of Poland. Despite the large scale of deportations to the Ukrainian SSR, the situation was not brought to “normality”. In the spring of 1947 armed groups of the Ukrainian UPA were still operating on the areas inhabited by the Ukrainians. They attacked the neighbouring Polish villages, and the militia as well as military posts. This, in turn, caused retaliatory actions, directed against the Ukrainian villages, which also gave rise to high losses among the civilians. A massive action against UPA and the Ukrainian population at large was being prepared since the end of 1946. The death of General Karol Świerczewski in April 1947 accelerated the so-called action “Vistula”, that is – the deportation of the Ukrainian population. This operation, of military character, lasted between April and end of August 1947 and was meant to bring normalisation of the situation over the small border area, located to the South of Przemyśl and to the East of Sanok.

Table III.27. Ukrainian population resettled to the USSR
between 15 October 1944 and 5 July 1946

Voivodship	Numbers of Ukrainian population		
	subject to resettlement	registered for resettlement	effectively resettled
Lublin	201,200	192,700	190,700
Rzeszów	280,200	269,000	267,800
Cracow	24,200	21,800	21,800
Totals	505,600	483,500	480,300

Source: Szcześniak, Szota (1973, pp. 486–488).

Table III.28. Ukrainian population resettled to the USSR in the
years 1944–1946

Until the date:	From the voivodship of			
	Lublin	Rzeszów	Cracow	in total
15.11.1944	–	–	–	3,505
1.01.1945	–	–	–	39,864
1.03.1945	–	–	–	81,323
15.08.1945	125,381	82,781	13,069	222,509
1.04.1946	135,610	189,594	19,829	345,033
1.09.1946	193,975	267,380	20,093	482,662
1.11.1946	193,975	273,330	20,093	488,612

Source: Szcześniak, Szota (1973, p. 491).

A political assessment of the respective decision, and especially of the manner, in which this non-humanitarian undertaking was implemented, is quite difficult, indeed. In order to liquidate a minority, disloyal with respect to the state, the method of collective responsibility was applied. Forced deportations encompassed the entire population of Ukrainian nationality on the area, where the Ukrainian military forces were active. Against the background of the resettlements, which took place in the period here considered, the demographic scale of this action was not very pronounced. Within its framework around 140,000 Ukrainians were resettled. The ultimate effect was complete liquidation of the Ukrainian minority on the border-adjacent territories. The political Polish-Ukrainian boundary became the ethnic, language and denominational boundary (see Fig. III.12).

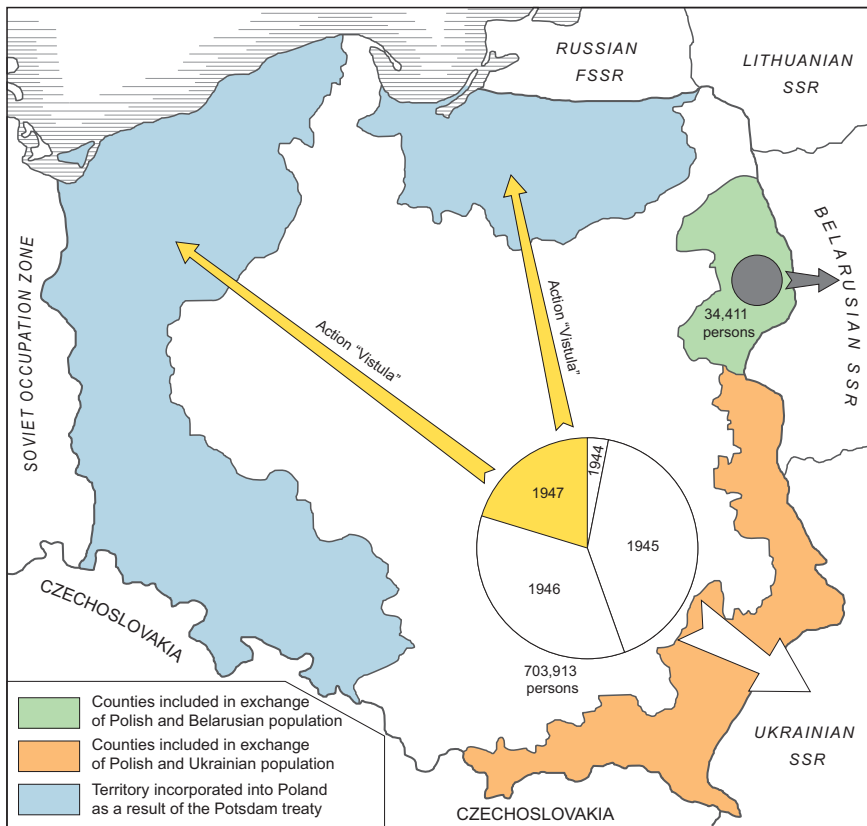


Fig. III.12. Resettlement of the Ukrainian and Belarusian population from the eastern border-adjacent territories

Source: own elaboration.

The primary intention of the Polish communist authorities was to settle the deported Ukrainian population on the Western and Northern Lands. At the same time, the decision was taken of securing maximum dispersion of this population. The principle was not to settle them in the neighbourhood of the western boundary of the country nor along the seacoast. Efforts were made to avoid their concentrations close to a provincial seat. Generally, higher concentrations of the Ukrainian population were avoided and the rule was adopted that only few families could be settled in one village, while the share of the Ukrainian population in a county could not exceed 10%. These recommendations, though, were not in reality strictly fulfilled. The biggest number of the Ukrainians was resettled to the voivodship of Olsztyn – 55,089 persons. They were directed towards the depopulated counties, situated along the boundary with the Kaliningrad district. After the resettlement action, in the county of Górowo Iławieckie the share of Ukrainians attained 48.2% of the rural population, in the county of Węgorzewo – 51.5%, in the county of Pasłęk – 31.7%, and in the county of Bartoszyce – 30.3% (Sakson, 1998, p. 251). Later on these shares gradually decreased. Other voivodships, to which larger numbers of Ukrainians were directed, were the voivodships of Szczecin – 48,465 persons, Wrocław – 21,237 persons, Poznań – 8,042 persons, Gdańsk – 6,838 persons, and Białystok – 991 resettled persons (Drozd, 1998, p. 198). They were mainly settled in the peripheral areas. The settlers obtained the formerly German farms, whose quality standards and equipment were much better than in their places of origin. Over close to ten years all the resettled Ukrainians were under the administrative surveillance. They could not return to their home areas. They were subject to discrimination, both in official terms, and from the side of their neighbours of Polish nationality, who were frequently the repatriates from the Ukrainian SSR. These repatriates would blame the Ukrainians for the repressions they had to endure during the war from the side of the Ukrainian nationalist groups. Dispersion of the Ukrainians among the Polish population had a decidedly negative impact on the possibility of cultivating their separate ethnic identity. They would undergo very quickly language assimilation, and then ethnic assimilation. When migrating to yet new places of residence they would usually not admit their ethnic origins. The ban on returning to the home areas was in principle abolished in 1956. Still, only few Ukrainians returned to the places, from where they were deported. Their homes, even if still standing, were already the property of the Polish settlers, who were inimical towards those returning.

The resettlement of the Belarusian population to the Belarusian SSR took on quite limited dimensions. After the end of war, in the years 1944–1946, 34,411 persons left for the Belarusian SSR from the voivodship of Białystok (12,828 persons from the county of Białystok and the city of Białystok, 10,122 from the county of Bielsk Podlaski, and 960 persons from the county of Sokółka). This, however, was not quite 20% of the totality of the Belarusian population living to the West of the Curzon line.

On the Polish side a relatively limited Belarusian minority remained, inhabiting the areas around Bielsk Podlaski, Hajnówka and Siemiatycze.

III.14. Planned resettlement of the German population to the Potsdam Germany

The decision on the resettlement of the German population from Poland was taken at the Potsdam conference by the three allied powers, i.e. the United States, USSR and United Kingdom. The implementation program was established on November 20th, 1945, by the Allied Council of Supervision of Germany. The Potsdam Treaty states in Chapter XIII: "The conference reached the following agreement concerning the removal of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The three governments, having considered the issue under all aspects, agree that resettlement of the German population, or its part, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, should be undertaken. The governments agree that any kind of resettlement that would follow, ought to be realised in an organised and humanitarian manner. Given that the inflow of a large number of Germans to Germany would increase the charge already borne by the occupation authorities, the governments are of the opinion that the Allied Council of Supervision of Germany ought first of all to study this problem with special consideration of the issue of just division of those Germans among the particular occupation zones. In accordance with this, the governments issue the instructions to their respective representatives in the Allied Council to file as soon as possible with their respective governments the reports on the numbers of persons having come to Germany from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and, taking into account the present situation in Germany, to determine approximately within what time and at what rates further resettlement could take place" (Lipóczy, Walichnowski, 1982, p. 50).⁶²

The decisions, concerning the resettlement, were questioned in Germany after the war. These decisions were held to be violating the norms of international law. Discussion on this subject, though, especially from the Polish point of view, is pointless, Poland not being a party to the Potsdam agreement, which, as all the international treaties ending the wars, was written by the victors and obliged the

⁶² Leaders of the Western powers fully accepted in the final phase of the war the resettlement of the German population from the post-war Poland. There are numerous documents confirming this. Thus, for instance, Churchill, on January 10th, 1944, declared to the then Prime Minister of the Polish government, Stanisław Mikołajczyk: "some seven million Germans, inhabiting the areas between the former Polish-German border and Odra river, will be resettled to the proper Germany", and on January 12th, 1944, presented also to Mikołajczyk the design for an agreement, containing, in particular, the following point: "fourth, all Germans shall be resettled from Poland in its new boundaries". In his speech to the House of Commons on December 15th, 1944, he stated: "I am not scared, neither by the perspective of reshuffling of the population, nor by the very large scale resettlements, more feasible in the contemporary conditions than at any time before". President Roosevelt wrote on November 17, 1944, to Mikołajczyk: "If the Polish government and nation wish, in connection with the new boundaries of the Polish state, to carry out the resettlement of the ethnic minorities from and into the territory of Poland, the government of the United States shall voice no reservations and shall, as far as this is possible to realise, facilitate these resettlements" (*Polska Zachodnia...*, 1961, pp. 139–141).

losers. This was the case in Vienna in 1815, in Versailles in 1919, and so Potsdam in 1945, after the Third Reich had unconditionally capitulated, was no exception. The agreement was also binding for Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

The Allied Council of Control over Germany established that the resettlement shall encompass 3.5 million Germans in Poland, to be relocated to the Soviet zone (2 million) and to the British zone (1.5 million). The resettlement was to start in December 1945 and end in July 1946. A schedule, according to consecutive months, was established:

- December 1945 – 350,000 Germans, i.e. 10% of their number,
- January 1946 – 175,000, 5%,
- February 1946 – 175,000, 5%,
- March 1946 – 525,000, 15%,
- April 1946 – 525,000, 15%,
- May 1946 – 700,000, 20%,
- June 1946 – 700,000, 20%,
- July 1946 – 350,000, 10%.

It was admitted that some time shifts, resulting from transport difficulties or weather conditions, may ensue.

On the basis of rough estimates it can be supposed that at the instant of termination of military activities and signing of the unconditional capitulation of the Third Reich, on the territories, which were to become Polish, there were about four million persons, having been German citizens before the war. It is very difficult to determine, how many of them were of Polish nationality. Polish authorities maintained, on the basis of various kinds of documents, including the German ones, that this number was higher than one million. It is true that more or less the same number of the former German citizens passed after the war the difficult verification procedure and demonstrated their Polish extraction. Later on it turned out that this was largely an opportunistic effect and that this population, even if of Polish origins and language, was deeply imbued with the influence of German culture and civilisation. This fact bore an impact on the evolution of their consciousness and brought a gradual identification with the German community. In addition, this kind of evolution started to bring definite economic advantages. The later change of the ethnic option of a large part of this population was not expected immediately after the war and because of this, on the basis of the situation as of 1945, they were considered to be the native Polish population. Such assumption was of high practical importance, since on the basis of the decisions taken at the Potsdam conference Poland was only obliged to resettle from its territory the entire German population. The wording of the respective decision of August 2nd, 1945, was with this respect quite unambiguous: "The three governments, having considered the issue under all aspects deem it necessary to undertake the resettlement to Germany of the German population or its elements having remained in Poland..." (Kokot, 1957, pp. 79–82). Fulfilment of this stipulation under the circumstances of 1945 required the relocation of more than three million former German citizens to the Potsdam Germany. Besides, there were close to half a million persons of German nationality residing on the territory of the 2nd Commonwealth, situated to the West of the Curzon

line. The plan of resettlement of Germans from Poland was approved by the Allied Council of Supervision on 20 November 1945. This body was fully aware of the dimensions and consequences of the envisaged action and expected, as indicated already before, that 3.5 million persons of German nationality be relocated from Poland to Germany.

During the second half-year of 1945 the situation of the German population was unstable. Immediately after the end of military operations German population started to return to their home areas. This, however, lasted for a short time. The border was blocked and the spontaneous or coerced outflow of the German population to the West continued. According to the data quoted in the book *Polska Zachodnia...* (1961, p. 317) the spontaneous outflow amounted in 1945 to 450,000–500,000 persons, while the local resettlement actions affected 150,000–225,000 Germans. As a consequence of the harsh living conditions the number of deaths among the German population was higher than the number of births by 50,000 to 100,000⁶³. German population, relocated to Germany, would fall victims on the way of the unpunished robbing from the side of the Polish looters and militiamen, as well as Soviet and Polish soldiers.

The organised resettlement of the German population started only in 1946, and it was preceded by the Polish-British agreement of February of that year. At the same time (14 February 1946) population census was carried out in Poland, according to which there were 2,288,000 persons of German nationality on the territory of Poland. Besides, 417,400 persons were included in the verification action, aiming at the establishment of nationality. The negatively verified persons, who did not succeed in demonstrating their Polish nationality, were directed for resettlement.

Four transportation routes, meant to carry the relocated persons, were determined jointly with the British representatives: Route "A": Szczecin – Lübeck, Route "B": Szczecin – Bad Segeberg, Route "C": Kaławsk (now Węgliniec) – Helmstedt, and Route "D": Kaławsk – Friedland.

The first transport left Szczecin for the British zone on 27 February 1946. Conform to the agreement one railway transport was to depart every day, carrying 1,500 persons. Then, starting with 25 March 1946, sea transport was put in motion. It was envisaged that 1,000 persons would sail away every day. Since the British did not provide the promised transport means, the entire action proceeded slower than planned. Simultaneously, railway transports carrying the relocated persons were going through two border crossings in Lower Silesia – in Kaławsk and Tuplice, heading both for the British and Soviet zones. Within the framework of the so-called "Operation Swallow" altogether 1,360,000 Germans

⁶³ In very many cases the relocations of Germans were taking place in dramatic conditions. The term, used by the Germans, of *Tragödie ungeheueren Ausmasses* ("tragedy of unheard of scale") renders correctly the image of the experience of thousands of the relocated. During a long waiting for the transport, and then in the crowded cars, many older and sick persons, as well as children, died. The numerous facts, associated with this process, are recalled in memoirs of the victims of the tragic events. In one of the accounts one can read: "During the 15-days transport 88 persons died of hunger and exhaustion. Then, further 280 persons died due to the resettlement a couple of weeks later in Zittau and Niederoderwitz" (Nitschke, 2000, p. 154).

were deported to the British zone. The first resettlement transport to the Soviet zone left from Szczecin on 29 January 1946. The relocation lasted over the entire year 1946. The frosty winter of 1946–47 interrupted the deportations for a short time. They were resumed in April 1947. The transports were directed then only to the Soviet occupation zone, and Polish railway transport facilities were used (Kosiński, 1963, p. 38).

During the resettlement action the biggest number of transports passed through Kaławsk. Between 20 February and 5 December 1946 as many as 512 railway transports heading for the British zone passed through this station, carrying 886,652 persons of German nationality, while 197 transports with 287,873 persons went to the Soviet zone (*Polska Zachodnia...*, 1961, pp. 316–317). Since the end of 1947 the intensity of the resettlement action decreased considerably. Yet, it continued over 1948 and 1949. In the consequence of this action 2,275,300 persons, considered Germans, were altogether resettled from Poland to Germany, of whom 1,632,900 in 1946, 538,300 in 1947, 42,700 in 1948, and 61,400 in 1949. The breakdown of the numbers of the resettled according to monthly sub-periods is shown in Table III.29.

As we add to those resettled in the years 1946–1949 the ones having been transported already in 1945, we can estimate the total number of the resettled German population after the capitulation of the Third Reich. This calculation was carried out by B. Nitschke, who stated, when summing up her study: “The above calculations allow for the conclusion that during the organised resettlement action 2,871,665 Germans were removed from Poland. This number was lower by approximately 600,000 than envisaged in the plan of the Allied Council of Supervision of Germany. Yet, if we account, in addition, for 400,000 Germans, who were resettled from Poland during the deportations having taken place before the Potsdam agreement, we can conclude that the plan was fulfilled almost entirely. The number of the resettled Germans that we ultimately arrive at is 3,271,665” (Nitschke, 1997, p. 89, Fig. 18).

On the basis of estimates, provided by B. Nitschke (2000) and the earlier calculations of S. Banasiak (1968), as well as those contained in the ample study of A. Gawryszewski (2005), the scale of the post-war relocations of the German population from Poland has been summarised in the geographical and chronological setting.⁶⁴ The original location of residence before the relocation action was established and the destinations of the relocation transports, according to the occupation sectors. During the three post-war years (1945–1947), after the Potsdam conference, that is – after August 2nd, 1945, 2,835,600 Germans were resettled from Poland, with the highest number having left Poland in 1946 – 1,649,100 persons (see Table III.30).

The statistical data presented according to various sources of information are not fully consistent. The differences, though, are not too pronounced, and so there is no need of making explicit efforts to bring these data to full consistency.

⁶⁴ German literature, devoted to the relocations from Poland, is very rich and often cited. Information on the less known items from this literature can be found in the article by Beer (2004).

Table III.29. Numbers of German population resettled from Poland in the years 1946–1949

Sub-periods of resettlement ¹	Numbers of the resettled
February 1946	10,700
March 1946	131,600
April 1946	153,400
May 1946	231,400
June 1946	241,800
July 1946	232,500
August 1946	198,800
September 1946	89,000
October 1946	97,700
January 1947	59,600
April 1947	25,700
May 1947	63,500
June 1947	61,400
July 1947	84,600
August 1947	93,000
September 1947	90,500
October 1947	46,500
November 1947	13,500
Entire year 1948	42,700
Entire year 1949	61,400
Total	2,275,300

¹ The table contains certain gaps. According to the monthly data between February and October 1946 the number of the resettled Germans was 1,286,900. On the other hand, the source quoted specifies that during the entire year 1946 as many as 1,632,900 persons of German nationality were relocated from Poland. Hence, 246,000 persons are not accounted for in the month-by-month breakdown.

Source: Kosiński (1963, p. 39).

It should not be forgotten that the post-war situation was unstable. Transports were registered by different administrative services. The military took part in this activity, and they were subordinated to a different kind of authority. Hence, scholars trying to analyse the respective data and to determine the precise scale of the resettlement action had quite a complex task to solve. Likewise, different numbers appear in the statistics, concerning the numbers of relocated persons, having reached destinations in the particular occupation sectors, into which Germany was divided (see Table III.31).

In the process of resettlement some clearly defined principles were followed. This was associated with the professional usefulness and the place of employment or residence of the resettled. Thus, the first ones to be resettled were the

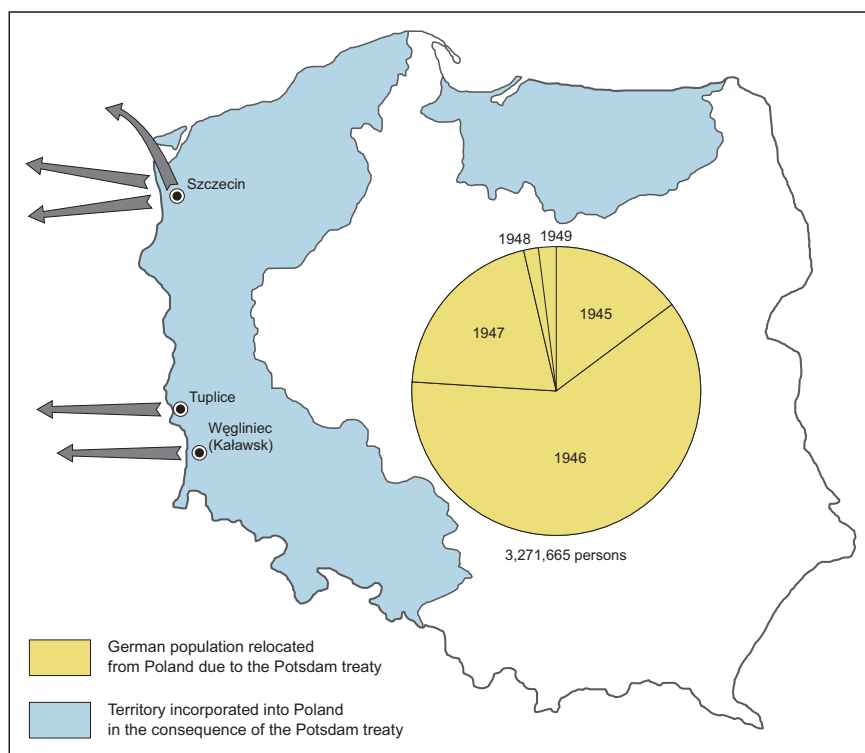


Fig. III.13. Planned resettlement of the German population from Poland in the period 1946–1949

Source: own elaboration.

unemployed originating from urban areas, those employed by the Polish households, or by private trade and industrial entrepreneurs, as well as Germans residing on the farms already taken over by Poles. Then, in the consecutive phase, German employees of lower skills, and those employed in the self-governmental and state enterprises were resettled. The last group meant for resettlements was constituted by the German employees, necessary for the Polish economy, working in manufacturing and mining, who were claimed by their home places of work (Gawryszewski, 2005, p. 454).

Side by side with the civilian population, the POWs were allowed to return to Germany, those POWs having been until then employed in Polish economy. Between 1948 and 1950 altogether 35,300 POWs left Poland for Germany (in 1948 – 6,300, in 1949 – 27,600, in 1950 – 1,500).

The here presented statistical data imply that the planned and organised resettlement action encompassed between 1945 and 1949 approximately 3.1 million Germans. It has already been mentioned that at the end of 1945 the Allied Council of Supervision of Germany expected that between December 1945 and end of July 1946 Polish authorities would relocate to the Soviet and British sectors in Germany

3.5 million Germans. This turned out to be unrealistic. The resettlement would proceed less intensively and were significantly delayed. They continued over the second half of 1946 and then even over the next year, 1947. The dimensions of the resettlement action diminished distinctly only in the three subsequent years (1948–1950) and included in that latter period altogether 136,200 persons.

Table III.30. Germans resettled from Poland in the years 1945–1947

Region	Numbers of resettled Germans		
	1945	1946	1947
Lower Silesia	105,000	1,102,916	217,773
Upper Silesia	111,000	156,530	21,442
Poznań	70,000	39,550	16,000
Gdańsk Pomerania	101,000	333,528	292,430
Western Pomerania	181,400		
Warmia and Masuria	25,000	16,564	45,475
Total	593,400	1,649,088	593,120

Source: Gawryszewski (2005, p. 453).

Table III.31. The resettlement of Germans from the territory of Poland to Germany in 1945–1950

Period	Numbers of resettled Germans			
	totals	to the occupation zone:		
		Soviet	British	American
1945 ¹	550,700	550,700	–	–
1946	1,930,200	749,200	1,181,000	–
1947	538,500	538,500	–	–
1948	42,700	vast majority	few thousand	few
1949	34,100	34,100	–	–
1950 ²	59,400	33,200	26,200	
Total	3,155,600	approx. 1,955,000	approx. 1,200,000	

¹ After the Potsdam conference (17 July–2 August 1945).

² With the flows of the resettled going already, at that time, either to the Federal Republic of Germany or to the German Democratic Republic.

Source: Gawryszewski (2005, p. 454).

The analysis of the respective data has showed that the planned and organised resettlement already after the Potsdam decisions turned out distinctly smaller than those movements that took place at the turn of 1944–1945. In that earlier period, namely, in effect of evacuations, flights and the so-called ante-Potsdam resettlements between 5 and 6 million of German civilian population left the ter-

ritory, which, owing to the verdict of the victorious powers, was taken away from Germany.

Now, if we yet add up all of the groups of the relocated persons and refugees, we arrive at the number significantly exceeding eight million, referring to the Germans, who left for good the territory of Poland in its new boundaries – the eastern ones determined at Yalta and the western ones established by the victorious allies in Postdam. This estimate does not account, of course, for the military, nor the civilian population, who moved during the war into the territories situated to the East of the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers.

The problems, associated with the number of the resettled Germans and the losses that the German population suffered during the movement of the front, mass flight, as well as in the effect of the retaliatory activities carried out by the Soviet and Polish side, are extremely popular in German literature. Various estimates and balances of losses are being provided, differing from the ones given by the Polish authors. The German studies have a highly differentiated value, ranging from the clearly tendentious reports, meant to demonstrate that planned genocide was carried out on the eastern territories of Germany, up to the more objective calculations, in which the scale of the German losses and the volumes and directions of resettlement movements were determined in a more reliable manner.

In view of the importance of this problem, which bears an impact on the Polish-German relations, it is worthwhile to give an example of assessment of the most common German opinions. The critical assessment we present here is based on the map contained in a popular historical atlas devoted to history of Germany in the 20th century (Hilgemann, 1984, p. 63). This map is quoted in the present report (Fig. III.14). The author referred to undertakes to show the demographic balance of the German population by putting on the map – in the breakdown according to a number of provinces – the following statistical data:

- the number of German population in 1939,
- the irreversible demographic war and post-war losses of the German population,
- the number of relocated Germans, including those, who moved into the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany,
- the number of German population having stayed in their previous places of residence, as of 1950.

The first of these data items specifies that the territories lost by Germany to the advantage of Poland and the USSR (in the latter case – the district of Kalininograd – Königsberg, Królewiec) were inhabited in 1939 by 9,955,200 persons. This number includes both parts of East Prussia, the southern, incorporated into Poland, and the northern, incorporated into the USSR. The number as such is correct and does not give rise to reservations. One should perhaps only mention the fact omitted by the author of the map, namely that this number concerns all German citizens, and not the persons of German nationality. The number of victims among the German population was estimated as equal 2,004,300. Even, though, if we account for the war losses among the German soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*, originating from these areas, this number is still too high. We can mention at this

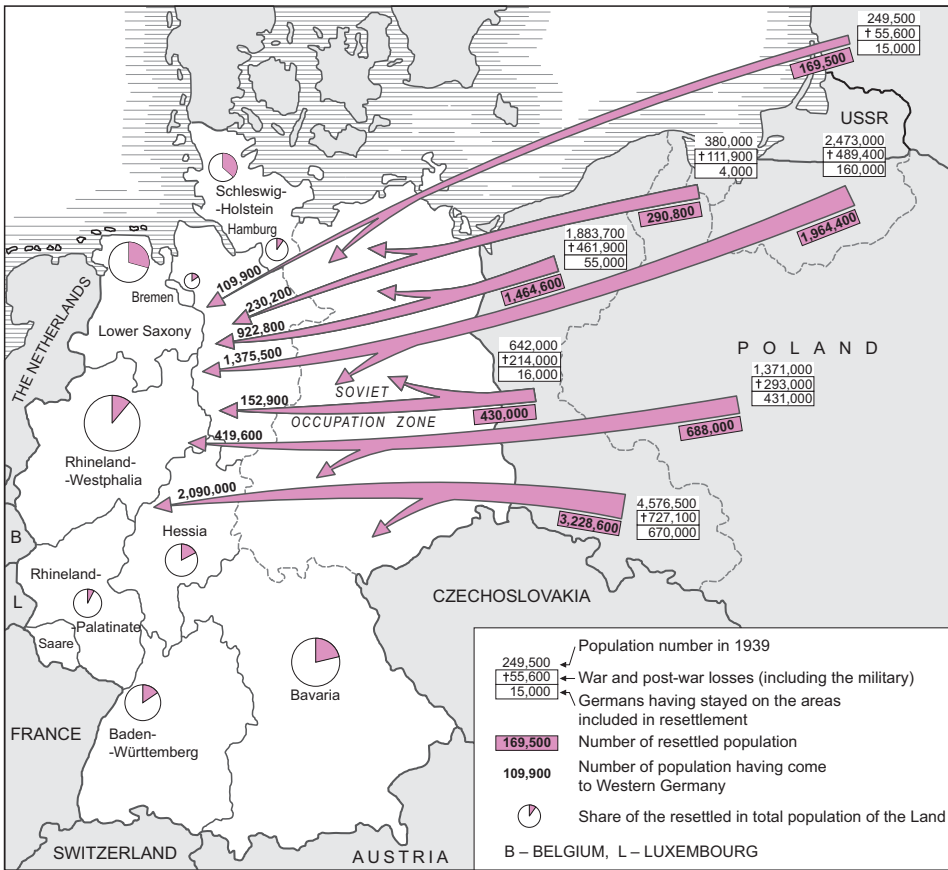


Fig. III.14. Demographic losses, flight and resettlement of the German population from the areas lost by Germany

Source: own elaboration, after Hilgemann (1984).

point that the most recent German calculations, performed by R. Overmans, and quoted in the report by Z. Zieliński (1998, p. 193) give the estimate of the losses borne during the flight, relocation and deportation from the Polish areas as equal around 400,000 persons⁶⁵. The total number of the resettled is estimated

⁶⁵ German analyst R. Overmans calculated, when determining the estimates concerning the number of victims of the flight, forced relocations and deportations, that more than 400,000 citizens of Germany died on the territory of the present-day Poland. Overmans distinguished three essential categories of losses: the victims of deportations (*Deportationsopfer*) – 200,000, persons killed by the Soviet or local (Polish?) troops – 120,000, and persons having died in the camps and during transportation – 100,000 (Overmans, 1994, p. 60; Sakson, 1998, p. 19). It can be assumed that these calculations are generally reliable. Data on this subject are contained in the statistical documentations, elaborated by the German side (*Vertreibung...*, 1989; *Dokumentation...*, 1984). These elaborates were analysed and commented upon in an article, published in Polish language (Haar, 2007).

as equal 7,398,400 persons. The number of the remaining on place is also given: 1,105,500. This last number is definitely close to the reality of that time. The overall balance implies, though, that in this calculation the number of the relocated persons must have been underestimated.

Simultaneously, the map presents the analogous calculations for the territory contained within the boundaries of pre-war Poland. The estimates, concerning this issue, are by all means far from reality. The total number of Germans in Poland is given as equal 1,371,000. According to the Polish census of 1931 there were altogether only 741,000 Germans on the entire territory of Poland (that is – including the areas to the East of the Curzon line), and even accounting for the real demographic increase over the period 1931–1939 we cannot obtain more than 780,000 Germans. The demographic losses, prohibitively difficult to estimate, were shown as equal 293,000. Further, 431,000 Germans supposedly remained after the World War II on the Polish lands to the East of the boundaries defined at Versailles. It goes without saying that this estimate has nothing to do with reality, neither.

Generally speaking, the German estimates here illustrated are not only highly arbitrary, but also clearly tendentious in presentation of the German losses. Putting together of a reliable balance is, however, very difficult⁶⁶. The issue is made more complex by the fact that during the war there was a very large inflow of the German population to the areas to the East of the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers (2.5–3 million civilians, the military put apart). Some of them came in the initial phase of war, while other ones were resettled temporarily at the turn of 1944 in order to avoid British and American bombings. If we consider this whole German population, we reach the number of close to 11 million relocated Germans, who were forced to leave at the end of war and in the post-war period the areas, which were to become an integral part of Poland⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ Attention is paid to these multiple difficulties not only by R. Overmans (1994, 1999), quoted before, but also by another German historian, Friedrich (1998), who demonstrates that the issue of the great demographic losses, caused by the dislocations from the East became one of the German historical national myths, which are governed already by their own internal laws. Objective presentation of the associated processes encounters high psychological barriers and becomes the subject of not just substance-matter-based controversies. The evidence has been, in particular, provided by the political echoes of the heated debate, incited by the design for the construction of a museum in Berlin ("Centre for Expulsions"), devoted to the deportations (Mazur, 2006).

⁶⁷ German population, deported from Poland and from other countries of Central-Eastern Europe, would settle in four sectors of the occupied Germany. The census organised by the allies in 1946 brought the estimate of the number of the resettled population at 9,670,000, of whom 5,948,000, that is – 61.4%, reached the American, British and French zones, while 3,602,000 (37.4%) went to the Soviet zone, and 120,000 went to Berlin (1.2%). Of the total number of the deported, 5,606,000 came from the territories lost to the advantage of Poland and 544,000 from the area of the pre-war Polish state. When the census was carried out, the action was not yet terminated. The subsequent German population census (1950) did not account for the territory of the newly established German Democratic Republic and on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany it reported 7,946,000 persons relocated from the East (*Heimatvertriebene* – expelled from their homelands), see Maryański (1966), p. 112.

The situation of the resettled, after they reached German territory, occupied by the allies, was very difficult. Manifestation of the German national solidarity, moral support and material assistance were expected. In reality, though, the refugees were usually discriminated against

III.15. Post-war emigration of Jews from Poland

It is very hard to establish the number of Polish Jews, having survived the World War II. An equally difficult task is constituted by the estimation of the number of Jews, who survived the Holocaust on the Polish territories, occupied by the Germans. The estimates, provided in the Polish literature of the subject, are highly differentiated. Thus, we can quote two extreme estimates, made available by the competent authors. So, for instance, a known specialist M. Borowicz (1981, p. 123), estimated the number of Jews having survived the genocide at 250,000, with 40–50,000 surviving in Poland, and the remaining ones having saved themselves by escaping far into the USSR. According to this author, the losses of the Jewish population in Poland were around 3.2 million. It can be expected that this estimate of the number of victims of the Holocaust is to a certain degree too high, since it assumes a too high number of the Jewish population in Poland in 1939. At the same time, this calculation does not account for some categories of the Jewish population, who survived the war. So, in particular, some Jews managed to flee to the West in 1939 through Romania and Hungary. Some survived the war in Germany on forced labour, in the concentration camps, and in the POW camps. A much higher number of Polish Jews, supposedly having survived the war – more than 800,000 – is mentioned by Cz. Madajczyk (1970, p. 328), author of numerous books on World War II. This estimate considers the Jews, hiding in Poland, whose number, according to Madajczyk, was between 225,000 and 240,000. To this, he adds those that survived the war in other European countries (110,000) and the ones, having been saved on the territory of the USSR (500,000). It appears that these estimates are little reliable. The number of victims is here distinctly underestimated, while the number of the Jewish population, having survived the war is overestimated. The data, concerning the total number of Jews having escaped to the USSR are definitely not true. Nowadays, when the Soviet source documentation has become available, it is known that this number was at least two times lower.

The demographic losses of the Jewish population in the years 1939–1945, conform to the most up-to-date data, contained in the monumental atlas, showing the history of Polish Jewry (*Atlas*, 2010, p. 391), amounted altogether to 2,800,000. Authors of the work cited assess that in the General Gouvernement 1,280,000 Jews were killed in the Holocaust, on the Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich – 440,000 (of whom 100,000 in Silesia), in the District of Białystok – 200,000, in the District of Galicia – 530,000, while on the remaining eastern areas, having belonged to Poland in 1939 – 350,000. These calculations, again,

and economically exploited. They were reminded of their eastern, “Polish” origins and lower level of culture. It was often only due to the interventions of the occupying authorities that they would get some modest dwelling and nutrition. These facts were recalled by the German historian Kossert (2008) in his book.

are most probably underestimations, since they would imply that 550,000 Polish Jews survived the genocide, which is inconsistent with the existing post-war documentation, concerning the number of surviving Jews. It can be expected that too low losses (350,000) were calculated for the Polish areas, which belonged during the war to the Commissariat East of the Reich and to the Commissariat Ukraine of the Reich.

The different calculations here presented lead to the conclusion that precise determination of the demographic losses borne by the Jewish population of the pre-war Polish citizenship encounters definite difficulties. For this reason some authors provide two numbers – the minimum and the maximum estimates. Such an interval of values was provided, in particular, by Berendt (2009, p. 75). According to him, the losses are contained between 2,975,000 and 3,150,000 persons. Since he takes as the starting point for calculation an overestimated number of Jewish population in Poland in 1939 (3.5 milion), it might be supposed that the lower bound he specifies is closer to reality.

According to Cz. Łuczak (1993, p. 128) some 100,000 Jews survived the war on Polish lands. A lower variant, at the level of 50,000, is admitted by A. Żbikowski (2005, p. 271). It can be assumed that these are very rough, but realistic estimates of the number of Jews, who were still alive when the Red Army came (having reached the middle course of Vistula river at the turn of August 1944, and then captured the western part of Poland during the January offensive in 1945). Thus, the number of Jews saved amounted to not quite 2% of the entire Jewish population from before the war. The German killing machine turned out to be very effective and efficient in the planned and organised genocide of Jews. The surviving Jews were kept hidden by the Poles, saving their lives, in various sorts of smart hideouts. This activity required courage, determination and readiness for utmost sacrifice, as death was the penalty for hiding Jews. These death penalties were consistently applied by the occupants after the hideout was found. Both the hidden Jews and the Poles, who helped them, were executed.⁶⁸ Some Jews survived in the shelters and soil-huts, situated on forested, little populated areas, while some other lived until the end of war with arms in hands, fighting in the Polish or Soviet guerrilla troops. A number of Jewish orphans found refuge in Catholic monasteries, where the nuns would conceal their true origins.⁶⁹

Even less Jews survived the war in the concentration camps on the territory of Germany. They were liberated by the allied armed forces and some of them returned from the West to Poland. Similarly small numbers of Jews managed to

⁶⁸ The number of Jews, having survived on the "Aryan side" is hard to establish. They belonged in their majority to two groups. In the first of them were those, who had fictitious documents, excluding their Jewish origins. Those from the second group were kept hidden in various masked concealed places. Both groups were constantly at risk of being found out. That is why not many of them altogether survived the war. A book by the British historian Paulsson (2007) is devoted to these problems.

⁶⁹ The Provincial Jewish Committee carried out at the end of 1945 a survey among Jews staying at that time in Lodz. The questions concerned the place of survival during the war. Out of 41,474 persons asked, 20,700 survived in German camps, 10,353 in the USSR, 6,924 on the "Aryan side", 1,500 in guerrilla detachments, and 1,165 in the forests and shelters (Rykała, 2007, p. 21).

survive on the territories of Hungary and Romania. Immediately after the end of military activities between 20,000 and 40,000 persons of Jewish extraction returned to Poland from the West and South of Europe (Chodakiewicz, 2000, p. 388). It is roughly estimated that on the area of Poland and the neighbouring countries, occupied by the Nazis, not quite 100,000 Jews, having been Polish citizens before the war, survived the Holocaust.

According to the most recent calculations, 350,000 Polish Jews survived the war, of whom 230,700 in the USSR (those, who returned just after the war as repatriates), 36,000 in the camps, 40,000–60,000 hidden on the “Aryan side”, 10,000 as refugees in China, 3,500 in Palestine, 10,000 in Great Britain, and 18,700 of the later repatriates from the USSR. This estimate does not include approximately 16,000 Jews, serving in the Polish People’s Army, fighting side by side with the Soviet army (Berendt, 2009, p. 75).

We have already mentioned that after the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact had been signed, and the Soviet army overtook the eastern territories of Poland, mass deportations of Polish citizens far into the USSR took place. Among them, persons of Jewish origin were deported, as well. Besides, a number of Jews managed to escape to the East after the Nazi aggression against Poland. Some young Jews were mobilised to the Soviet army or were transported to the industrial plants located behind the line of fighting. Jewish population, subject to forced or free-will resettlement to the East, avoided the Holocaust. They suffered definite demographic losses due to hard living conditions, but generally survived until the end of war, and then were allowed to return to Poland.

After the new, communist authorities in Poland had been established in Lublin, a preliminary agreement was signed between this new administration and the governments of the Soviet republics: Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian, on the resettlement of the Polish and Jewish population, having pre-war Polish citizenship. Side by side with Poles some 30,000 Jews came then to the territory of the new Poland (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 142). The subsequent repatriation agreement was signed on 6 July 1945. The return was made possible to Poland for the persons of Polish and Jewish nationality, who were on September 17th, 1939, Polish citizens. In the framework of this repatriation action 136,579 repatriates of Jewish nationality returned to Poland (*Wysiedlenia...*, 2008, p. 143). They would usually not return to their former places of residence. This resulted not only from the objective causes, like destruction of the dwelling or occupation by new residents, or the fact that their homes were by that time already on the territory of the USSR, but also from deeper psychological reasons. It was really hard to come back to the places, where dramatic events had taken place, associated with the deaths of the closest ones. Besides, Polish population was often ill-disposed with respect to the returning Jews, fearing the estate and wealth claims. In view of all this the Jews, coming from the East, were mainly directed to the former German territories, where possibilities of settling in the places, abandoned by the German population, existed. The highest number of Jews found their place of residence in Lower Silesia. Attractive locations of residence for Jews were also the capital city of Warsaw and Lodz. According to the data from the Registry and Statistics of the Central Jewish Committee in Poland, after the termination of the

planned repatriation action, on the new territory of Poland, in July 1946, there were 244,964 persons of Jewish nationality. Table III.32 shows the places of their residence according to voivodships and bigger cities.

The here quoted data on the numbers of Jews were announced after counterchecking and verification, since during the period in question Jews often changed their locations of residence and it was possible to have the same person registered more than once. Owing to a special statistical procedure these potential deformations were avoided. It was established in a reliable manner that in the total number of Jews registered, 136,530 persons were the repatriates, who came from the USSR between February and June 1946, while the remaining registered Jews, 108,411 persons, were either those, who survived the war on the territories occupied by the Germans, or came from the Soviet Union immediately after the war on their own. The estimations here provided ought to account, as well, for approximately 50,000 Jews, who left Poland between January 1945 and July 1946 and went to Western Europe.

The data, concerning the numbers of the Jewish population, who resided on the territory of the post-war Poland, have been for many years now used and considered fully established. It was only quite recently that they were once again verified and subject to statistical analysis by the geographer from the academic centre of Lodz, A. Rykała (2007). His well documented report presents and interprets precise data on the movements of the Jewish population, saved from Holocaust, who stayed for a longer or shorter period of time on the territory of Poland. According to his estimate there were in the middle of 1945 approximately 74,000 Jews in Poland, while at the end of 1948 – 99,800. This apparently not very significant difference was, however, the net effect of simultaneous migrations from Poland abroad and from the USSR to Poland (see Table III.33).

The highest number of Jews came from the USSR in the first half of 1946. Between February and the end of June 120,600 persons came then to Poland (see Table III.34).

These data can be complemented by adding the repatriates, who came in July 1946, namely 15,991 persons, and then also the demobilised soldiers of Jewish nationality (roughly 10,000), as well as those remaining in the military (3,000). In the framework of the legal, official repatriation approximately 150,000 Jews came from the USSR to Poland. Owing to these migration movements the number of Jewish population in Poland in the middle of 1946 was close to 250,000. This was the maximum number. Since that time instant, due to emigration, primarily to Israel, the number of Jewish population decreased by the end of 1948 to roughly 100,000, and by December 1950 to 60,000.

When commenting on the distribution of the Jewish population in the inter-war Poland we provided the estimated numbers as of 31 August 1939, summing up to 3,350,000 persons. It can therefore be concluded that the demographic loss between 1939 and 1945 amounted to 3,050,000 persons, that is – 91% of the pre-war number. Almost all of the dead were the victims of the Holocaust. It should be noted, though, that the respective statistical figures concern different territories (of the pre-war and post-war Poland). Certain, hard to determine, number of Jews survived on the areas situated to the East of the Curzon line, that is – on

the areas between the eastern boundary of Poland, established in 1945, and the eastern boundary of Poland as of 1939, and they remained after the war in the USSR. This does not change the obvious fact that approximately 3 million Jews, Polish citizens, have not survived the war. A vast majority of them were killed by the German Nazis in the course of the planned and ruthlessly implemented extermination.

Table III.32. Distribution of Jewish population in Poland in 1946

Voivodships and cities	Numbers of Jewish population	
	persons	%
Wrocław voivodship	69,993	28.6
Warsaw and Łódź voivodships	56,758	23.2
Szczecin	30,951	12.6
Katowice voivodship	25,587	10.4
Cracow voivodship	21,514	8.7
Lublin voivodship	6,882	2.8
Częstochowa	2,167	0.9
Gdańsk	2,138	0.9
Białystok	1,567	0.6
Włocławek	966	0.4
Przemysł	768	0.3
Bydgoszcz	658	0.3
Poznań	343	0.2
Olsztyn	224	0.1
On the remaining territories	24,448	10.0
Totals	244,964	100.0

Source: Orlicki (1983, p. 168).

Table III.33. Numbers of Jewish population in Poland in the years 1945–1948

State as of:	Number of Jewish population
13 June 1945	74,000
Second half of 1945	80,100
13 January 1946	86,100
1 July 1946	243,900
End of 1946	223,000
1947	95,500
1948	99,800

Source: Rykała (2007, pp. 19–27).

Table III.34. Numbers of Jewish repatriates having come to Poland from the USSR in 1946

Month of 1946	Number of	
	transports	the repatriates
February	20	9,092
March	38	14,785
April	56	33,457
May	53	39,704
June	36	23,541
Totals	203	120,579

Source: Rykała (2007, p. 29).

It was expected that the few surviving Jews would find their permanent residence in the new, socialist Poland, which, after the change of the economic and social system and the geopolitical transformations, declared its Jewish citizens equal rights and lack of discrimination, as well as full protection against anti-Semitism. These declarations were indeed expressed through corresponding legal regulations and actual practices. The new authorities considered most important the class and wealth criteria, also with respect to the past generations, and these were treated very seriously. On the other hand, the ethnic or denominational differences were of secondary importance. Jewish population acquired broad freedom in the domain of organisation of their social life and cultural autonomy. Many persons of Jewish extraction occupied pronounced posts in the developing power apparatus, which was supposed to constitute the warranty of stability and safety. Despite these formal and actual safeguards the majority of the Jewish population decided to leave Poland in a relatively short period of time. The reasons were quite complex and resulted from numerous subjective and objective conditions. Certainly, the traumatic memory of the places where the parents and friends were killed, was a barrier to building for a normal life. Most of them were aware of the irreversible loss of their homes and personal wealth and belongings, which were either destroyed, or taken over by the new, Polish owners, or nationalised. This, however, might not have been the most important reason. The decisions of emigration were largely influenced by the social and political atmosphere reigning then in Poland. An important proportion of the Polish society saw in Jews not only competitors with respect to the former Jewish property, but, first and foremost, identified Jews with the enforced communist power. The existing stereotype of the so-called Jew-Communist syndrome found at that time its apparent justification and impacted heavily upon the Polish-Jewish relations, which were gradually becoming increasingly antagonistic⁷⁰. At the same time the

⁷⁰In the years 1944–1947 close to 800 persons of Jewish nationality were killed in Poland either by the anti-communist underground forces or by the local population. The course and the reasons of these mostly isolated murders were quite diversified. Many of them had an anti-Semitic aspect. Some Jews were killed as the functionaries of the new communist authorities. In the situation of the post-war instability the simple criminal motives, related to armed robbery, were very frequent.

Zionist organisations, active in Western Europe, started an intensive propaganda action, calling the Jews to leave Poland. They were perceived as the highly motivated settlers for the territory of Palestine.

A dramatic event, which to an important extent triggered the mass post-war emigration of Jews from Poland, was the pogrom in Kielce (July 4th, 1946), during which 42 Jews were cruelly murdered by the Poles. While we would not like to delve in the origins and the local, as well as more general background of this event, in which there were evident elements of an external provocation or even participation, this killing of the innocent people brought about highly important repercussions among Polish Jews, having survived the war. Even though the persons, taking part in the killing, were severely punished, decisions of emigrating found their rational and moral underpinnings. The government of the socialist Poland, normally reluctant, if not prohibiting explicit emigration, accepted in principle this collective decision. Facilitating procedures and special logistic opportunities were introduced, applying solely to persons of Jewish origin. Exodus of the Jewish population from post-war Poland started, and it lasted, with a short break at the beginning of the 1950s, until 1959, and then ended after the March events of 1968. Ultimately, by the turn of the 1970s, Jewish minority in Poland dwindled to well below twenty thousand persons, meaning that in several phases altogether approximately 230,000 persons of Jewish origin emigrated.

It is estimated that during the two post-war years, 1945–1946, roughly 120,000 Jews left Poland, though until July 1946 emigration had largely an illegal character (see Table III.35), to be then formalised after that date.

Table III.35. Illegal emigration of Jews from Poland
(July 1945–May 1946)

Period	Numbers of emigrants
July 1945	4,600
August 1945	9,875
September 1945	6,475
October 1945	9,760
November 1945	520
December 1945	2,050
January 1946	412
February 1946	960
March 1946	800
April 1946	1,098
May 1946	3,502
June 1946	11,000 / 8,000
Total	51,052 / 48,052

Source: *Wysiedlenia...* (2008, p. 145).

After the pogrom in Kielce the formal obstacles to emigration of Jews were removed and those Jews, who declared the wish of leaving Poland, were allowed to go abroad. Yet, despite the formal consent from the top authorities, some of the local administrations would try to hamper the emigration of Jews. This fact resulted mainly from the economic reasons. In some localities of the new western lands of Poland (Legnica, Wałbrzych, Dzierżoniów) Jews constituted a significant percentage share of the population and their emigration had a negative effect on the local socio-economic life. Similarly negative attitude towards the emigration of Jews was displayed by the Central Jewish Committee in Poland, afraid of losing its *raison d'être* and the possibilities of functioning. It is estimated that in the second half of 1946 roughly 70,000 Jews left Poland (see Table III.36).

The end of 1946 marked clearly the termination of the consecutive wave of the emigration of Jews from Poland. The remaining Jewish minority numbered approximately already around 170,000 persons. Their economic situation gradually stabilised. In distinction from the inter-war period, when Jews were concentrated in central and eastern Poland, those, who remained after the war mainly concentrated in Lower Silesia and in some of the bigger cities: Warsaw, Lodz, Cracow and Szczecin. Their social and denominational structure was also different. In their majority those Jews were dissociated from Judaism, having lay worldview and communist orientation. They easily assimilated in the Polish environment. Yet, the process of assimilation was to a large extent superficial and apparent. When in May 1948 the state of Israel was established, the emigration of Jews from Poland got a new stimulus. At the turn of the 1950s approximately 28,000 Jews left Poland, mainly for Israel. As mentioned already, another, consecutive wave of emigration took place after the events of October 1956 (the post-Stalinist “thaw”). Some 60,000 Jews left at that time. On the other hand, a new group of Jews came in the same period from the USSR, roughly 18,000 persons. They made a part of the wave of repatriates, who came from the USSR in the years 1956–1957, altogether approximately 245,500 persons. The majority of Jews returning then from the Soviet Union treated Poland as a transit country and left afterwards for Israel.

Table III.36. Legal emigration of Jews from Poland
(July 1946–December 1946)

Period	Estimates according to:	
	Cohen	Bauer
July 1946	19,000	19,000
August 1946	35,346	30,722
September 1946	12,379	11,101
October 1946	–	2,670
November 1946	2,545	2,550
December 1946	1,897	1,900
Totals	71,167	67,943

Source: *Wysiedlenia...* (2008, p. 145).

III.16. Settling of the Western and Northern Lands by the population of Polish nationality

The establishment of the new western border, connected with acquisition of 102,700 sq. km of territory by Poland, put forward a very difficult task of settling this area, depopulated and ravaged by war, with the Polish population. At the same time, Poland lost its eastern territories and was totally destroyed by war. In a paradoxical manner these two factors facilitated the undertaking. After the agreements with the Soviet Union had been concluded it was expected that between three and three and a half million Poles would come from the East, for whom some place would have to be found. All in all 2.2 million persons came. Following a few years of occupation and the passage of the front, the country was completely devastated. Millions of people had no dwellings. They constituted the potential population of the settlers. This was yet amplified by other demographic conditions, facilitating the task. Polish countryside was traditionally overpopulated and disposed of surpluses of labour. The return to Poland was expected of the re-emigrants from the West, and of two million persons sent during the war to Germany. These people often had no possibility of returning to their previous places of residence. They could, therefore, become the new settlers. The territories acquired at the expense of Germany, referred to either as the Western and Northern Lands or as the Regained Lands, were attractive for settling for the Poles. Higher quality of structures, potential jobs and more developed settlement infrastructure than in the pre-war Poland made the migration decision easier. This was yet compounded by the political issues. Rapid settling of the acquired territory by the Polish population would turn the acquisition into a permanent one. Thus, settling of these so-called Regained Lands became a priority task for the Polish state. Its fulfilment required, though, carrying out of very large population movement over relatively short period of time. There existed a complete agreement of opinions in this domain between the new Polish administration, imposed by the Soviet Union, and the society. It can be stated from the historical perspective that the undertaking was fully successful. The settling of these areas by the Poles brought their full integration with the remaining parts of the country.

After Polish administration took over the territory situated to the East of the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers, two parallel resettlement actions started. On the one hand, the still remaining German population was being relocated to the Potsdam Germany, and on the other hand – both planned and spontaneous settling of the areas incorporated into Poland by Polish population was taking place.

Polish population of a variety of territorial origins started to flow into the area of the Regained Lands. This population is usually divided into three groups. The first category is constituted by the so-called re-settlers. These were the persons, who lived on the territory, which was both before and after the war within the boundaries of the Polish state. The second category was composed of those, who

were the so-called repatriates from the East. They came from the areas lost by Poland to the advantage of the Soviet Union. They usually had Polish citizenship from before the war. The third category of settlers came from Germany and other countries of Western Europe. They were referred to as re-emigrants or repatriates from the West. Most frequently these were the people sent during the occupation to Germany. This group included, though, also the representatives of the older Polish job emigration.

In view of the fact that the Polish native population, who remained in their previous places of residence, were concentrated on only small part of the entire area in question (Opole Silesia, Masuria, Warmia), the primary task in settling the whole area had to be fulfilled by the population moving in, who also played the essential role in the re-development of the entire territory.

Immediately after the military operations had ended the so-called re-settlers started to come to the Western and Northern Lands. They had the relatively shortest way to go, since they just had to cross the former Polish-German border, no longer in existence. During 1945 as many as 1,630,638 individual “re-settlers” (see Table III.37) came to the newly acquired territories.

Table III.37. Inflow of the “re-settlers”
to the Regained Lands in 1945

Reporting period	Number of persons having settled on the Regained Lands
Until 1 June 1945	150,995
June 1945	166,332
July 1945	384,312
August 1945	295,741
September 1945	215,376
October 1945	153,689
November 1945	167,418
December 1945	96,775
Total	1,630,638

Source: Banasiak (1963, p. 110).

The largest number of the “re-settlers” came in 1945 from the voivodship of Warsaw (369,067 persons), followed by the voivodships of Cracow (256,192), Lodz (228,680), Kielce (212,126), Lublin (202,226), Rzeszów (158,480), Poznań (112,698), Białystok (46,060) and Pomerania (45,106). The data quoted do not reflect fully the reality. On the one hand there were namely the cases of migration outside of any evidence, and on the other hand – some 300,000 persons did not stay for good, but returned to their former places of residence, while this fact was not recorded. There were even persons, who obtained twice the settler’s tickets.

At the same time the transports bringing repatriates from the East started to come to the Regained Lands. The formal basis for the settling of the repatriates

was constituted by the evacuation card and the list of belongings left to the East of Bug river, on the territories no longer Polish. During 1945 Polish eastern border was crossed in an organised manner by 724,000 repatriates.

Railway transports with the repatriates, coming from the USSR, were directed towards the Western and Northern Lands, where the newcomers were settled on the farms or acquired dwellings in towns, from which German population had already been or was soon to be relocated⁷¹. Relatively few repatriates would stop on the territories having belonged before the war to Poland. It was much more difficult to get a dwelling there. According to the data from the State Repatriation Office, 1,235,200 repatriates moved in an organised manner from the territory of the USSR to the Western and Northern Lands (that is – they were the persons, who changed their formal citizenship). These data are not complete, since many inhabitants of the former Polish eastern territories went to the former German lands, incorporated into Poland, outside of the official repatriation action. Out of the overall number of the resettled repatriates the biggest share came from Ukraine (49.6%), then from Belarus (20%) and from Lithuania (9.9%). The remaining ones returned from the farther territories of the Soviet Union (20.5%). The latter persons were mainly those deported in the years 1939–1941 from the Polish eastern territories (see Table III.38).

For technical reasons, mainly in view of the parallel setting of the railway lines, transports of Poles originating from Ukraine were directed to Silesia, while those leaving Lithuania and Belarus were expedited to Pomerania, Masuria and Warmia. In the then voivodships of Silesia and Wrocław among the registered repatriates 64.3% originated from Ukraine, while only 20% jointly from Lithuania and Belarus. On the other hand – in the belt of the four northern voivodships, situated between Ełk in the East and Szczecin in the West, that is – in the voivodships of Białystok, Olsztyn, Gdańsk and Szczecin – 44.4% of the repatriates came from Lithuania and Belarus, while 31.3% from Ukraine.

The returns from the West had a differentiated character. The returns of the re-emigrants were organised in a planned way and transports were directed in a purposeful manner. Thus, for instance, Polish coal miners from France or Belgium were settled in Wałbrzych or in Upper Silesia. The workers coming from

⁷¹ Railway transport of the repatriates to western Poland lasted between a couple of days and a fortnight. The repatriates were unloaded at the definite station of destination, from where, with cars, horse-driven carts or by foot were directed to the closest formerly German localities. There, in an organised or haphazard manner, they would settle in the abandoned houses, and hoist the white-and-red Polish flag, signalling that the house was already settled by the Polish families. In case the German owners still resided in the house, the Polish newcomers would move in and for a period of time, until the Germans were relocated, stayed together with them. Both sides were forced to accept these very difficult conditions of cohabitation. Despite of this, there were only sporadic cases of dramatic events. This was presumably due to the fact that both Germans and Poles felt being victims of war, forced wanderings and expulsions. The repatriates from the East had a more positive attitude towards Germans than the settlers from central Poland. All of them were aware that the decisions of the victorious allies on the exchange of population and the relocation of the German population, resulting from the defeat of the Nazi Germany, are final and cannot be reversed, and so one has to bear their consequences. That is why the German population treated the necessity of abandoning their home residences with feeling of fatalism and complete obedience.

Germany, deported during the occupation, did frequently in a haphazard manner find on their way back to Poland places for living and jobs and would stay for good in the localities situated on the new lands of western Poland. To this, one should add the so-called military settlers. The demobilised soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Polish (People's) Army were granted farms as a reward for their war exploits. Until December 1st, 1945, as many as 200,400 military and members of their families settled (Banasiak, 1963, p. 133)⁷².

Table III.38. The numbers and the distribution of the repatriates from the USSR on the Western and Northern Lands

Voivodships of the Western and Northern Lands	Number of repatriates				
	totals ¹	of that from:			
		Ukrainian SSR	Lithuanian SSR	Belarusian SSR	other republics
Białystok (part of)	9,500	1,200	8,300		15,000
Olsztyn	120,300	73,700	31,600	47,800	
Gdańsk (part of)	121,800	12,800	31,800		29,400
Szczecin	174,500	45,700	14,000	55,400	59,400
Poznań (part of)	111,300	30,400	11,100	30,100	39,700
Wrocław	410,300	216,500	18,000	114,600	61,200
Silesia (part of)	287,500	232,100	7,100		48,300
Totals	1,235,200	612,400	121,900	247,900	253,000

¹ The table presented, conform to its source, contains distinct statistical simplifications, namely in the case of the repatriates from the Belarusian SSR the data, concerning the voivodship of Gdańsk, encompass also those having come to the voivodships of Olsztyn and Białystok. The same applies to the repatriates, who moved from Belarus to the voivodship of Silesia, and were treated along with those having moved to the voivodship of Wrocław. Repatriates, who came from the remaining Soviet republics to the voivodship of Białystok, were treated together with those coming to the voivodship of Olsztyn.

Source: Czerniakiewicz J., Czerniakiewicz M. (2007, pp. 172–175).

The very first reliable information on the demographic situation date from the population census carried out on February 14th, 1946. The Regained Lands were inhabited then by 5,022,000 people, of whom 2,725,000 were Poles, 2,076,000 were Germans, 27,000 represented other nationalities, and 194,000 were persons in the course of verification procedure, that is – their Polish nationality was being checked. If we subtract the native population of Polish nationality of about one million, we can estimate that until 14 February 1946 roughly 1.9 million Poles moved into the Regained Lands.

⁷² In the final phase of war (May 1st, 1945), on the eastern front and at home, the armed forces established by the new communist authorities numbered altogether 348,900 privates and officers, of whom 51,600 in the 1st Polish (People's) Army, and 53,200 in the 2nd Army (*Historia Polski...*, 2003, p. 316). A large proportion of them were directed to the Western and Northern Lands, constituting a significant group of settlers in terms of numbers. They were given the farms taken over from the relocated German farmers.

The entire year 1946 was the period of intensive population movements. During that year 1,386,900 Germans were deported, while 1,794,300 Poles moved in. According to the estimates made at that time the number of the Polish population on the territories taken over from Germany (i.e. not accounting for the Free City of Gdańsk) was equal on January 1st, 1947, 4,642,800, and on June 1st, 1947, 4,985,000 (see Table III.39).

Table III.39. Territorial origins of the Polish population residing on the Regained Lands in 1947

Territorial origin	1 January 1947		1 June 1947	
	number	in %	number	in %
Native population	1,008,500	21.7	1,067,000	21.4
Resettlers from central Poland	1,934,500	41.7	1,957,000	39.3
Re-emigrants			309,000	6.2
Repatriates from the USSR	1,699,800	36.6	1,652,000	33.1
Totals	4,642,800	100.0	4,985,000	100.0

Source: Kosiński (1963, p. 58).

The here considered years 1946–1947 brought first of all essential changes in the ethnic structure of the Western and Northern Lands. The overall population number increased insignificantly, while the ethnic structure shifted in an essential manner. The number of Germans dropped from 2,036,000 in February 1946 down to 283,000 in June 1947. On the other hand, the number of Polish population (including the positively verified native population) increased from 2,760,000 to 4,985,000.

On the basis of the surprisingly precise calculations of S. Banasiak (1965, p. 22) it is possible to present the general scale of the settling action during the three post-war years. Thus, according to the author quoted, during the period 1945–1947 the number of settlers having come was 4,082,610, of whom 2,220,772 were the re-settlers, and 1,861,838 were repatriates (Fig. III.15). They were settled in the then voivodships of Białystok (55,797 persons), Olsztyn (420,783), Gdańsk (369,162), Szczecin (833,152), Poznań (380,870), Wrocław (1,570,321) and Silesia (442,525).

During just three years (1945–1948) a complete exchange of population took place on the territories incorporated into Poland. Each region and each larger town of this territory had in this context a specific character. On some areas the respective processes went on quicker, on the other ones – slower. This depended upon the geographical location and the degree of destruction of the fixed assets. Polish population sought free dwellings and appropriate jobs. Relocation of the Germans depended upon the transport capacities and the pressure, exerted by the Polish civilian and military authorities on the German population. The corresponding processes can be illustrated for the cases of two biggest towns on the territory considered, namely Wrocław and Szczecin. Mass deportation of the German population and the successive inflow of Poles resulted in

a definite dynamics of population of these cities and even more so – of the ethnic structure.

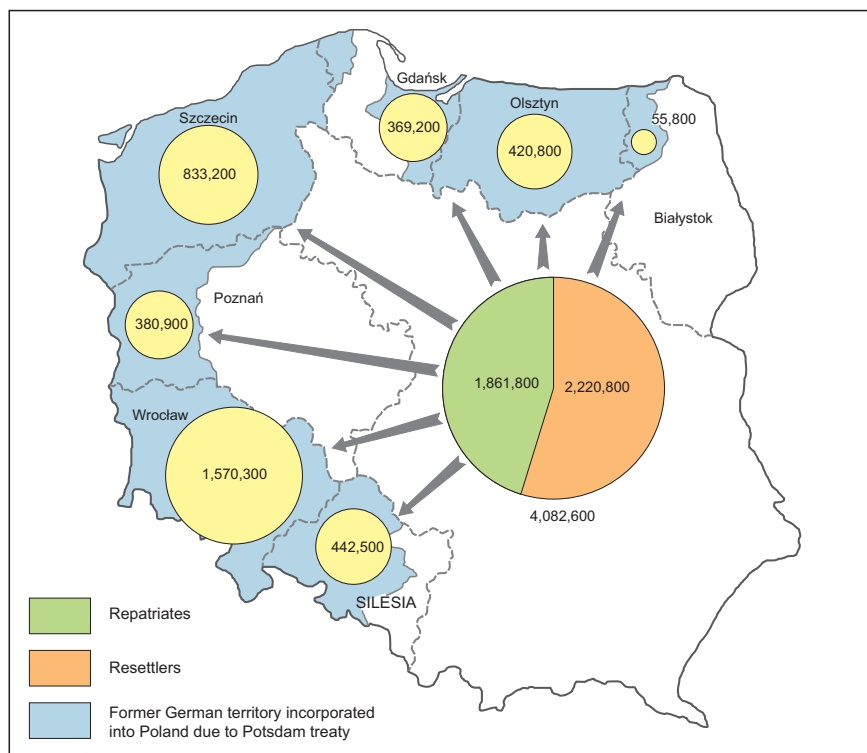


Fig. III.15. The action of settling the Regained Lands with Polish population in the period 1945–1947

Source: own elaboration.

The number of inhabitants of the pre-war Wrocław was in 1939 equal 638,300, and the city was purely German. The biggest ethnic minority was constituted by Jews, fully assimilated in terms of language and culture within the German environment. At the beginning of the 1930s there were more than a dozen thousand Jews in Wrocław, but in view of the Nazi persecutions many of them left the city and Germany, as well. The number of Poles is estimated at approximately 3,000. The maximum number of dwellers in Wrocław was reached in the middle of 1944, when the city had close to 800,000 inhabitants, including German refugees and people forced to work in Germany during the war, originating from various countries, occupied by the Third Reich.

At the instant the January offensive of the Soviet Army started, mass evacuation was initiated, which included nearly half of the inhabitants. Great demographic losses were caused by the siege of the city, which lasted between the end of January and beginning of May. In extremely difficult conditions, in the middle

of 1945, close to 245,000 persons camped in the ruins of Wrocław, among whom were just 8,000 Poles. Already in the second half of 1945 first organised resettlements of the German population started. Thus, for instance, on October 11th, 1945, in nine transports, 12,537 persons left Wrocław, while between November 8th and December 3rd, 1945, further 29,600 Germans were forced to leave. Simultaneously, Poles were coming to the city, and at the end of 1945 there were roughly 35,000 of them in Wrocław. Polish census, carried out in February 1946, showed the number of population in Wrocław at 186,400. This census, though, did not account for the entire German population. According to approximate data, 140,000 Germans were deported from Wrocław in 1946, and 60,000 in 1947. The inflow of Poles was similarly intensive, since in 1946 around 185,000 of them came, while in 1947 – around 90,000. The movements of population later on – both forced relocations of Germans and the migration of Poles to the city – were significantly smaller. The consecutive Polish census of 1950 registered 314,100 inhabitants in Wrocław, with more than 95% of this population being of Polish nationality. German Breslau became in just a couple of years Polish Wrocław.

The demographic processes, which took place in Szczecin, were more complex. The political status of this town was during several months of 1945 not quite certain⁷³. The city was located on the western bank of Odra river, and so Germans expected it to be left in Germany. The central quarters of the city had in 1939 approximately 271,000 inhabitants. After extensive suburbs had been in the same year incorporated in the city, the number of inhabitants increased to 382,900. Except for few Jews and Poles, Szczecin was inhabited exclusively by Germans. After the first evacuation, carried out by the Germans in September 1944, 238,100 persons were still in Szczecin. The second evacuation, carried out between February 1st and March 20th, 1945, included 75,000 of civilian population. After the right-hand, eastern bank of Odra river had been taken by the Soviet troops, the German headquarters of the Stettin fortress imposed the deportation, between March 20th and April 20th, 1945, of approximately 155,000 inhabitants (Zaremba, 1986, p. 139). The city became completely empty. The Soviet military authorities carried out the registration of the remaining Germans after having marched into the city. There were only 6,700 persons left, that is – 1.8% of the pre-war population. Final decisions as to the political status of the town had not yet been taken, and so German population started to return home. On July 5th, 1945, there were already 83,800 German inhabitants back in the town. After the Potsdam decisions it was already known that Szczecin should be incorporated into Poland. Polish authorities not only blocked the possibility of return of the former inhabitants to the city, but also started the action of organised relocation. The number of Germans dropped during 1946 from 60,000 to 8,000, and at the end of 1947 it was at mere 3,000.

⁷³ An ample documentation, concerning the post-war political fate of Szczecin, is contained in the source report of Zaremba (1986). This report provides the statistical data, showing the changes in the ethnic structure of the city. The same subject is also treated in the book of Golczewski (1967) and in the report by the Russian historian Karbovskiy (2007).

The inflow of the Polish population started. During the second half of 1945 around 30,000 Poles came to Szczecin. In the next year the inflow was particularly intensive. The number of Polish population as of 1 January 1947 was 108,000, and then as of 1 January 1948 – 136,000 (Zaremba, 1986, p. 373). Polish census of December 1950 showed 181,700 inhabitants. During several post-war years a complete exchange of the population took place. The total reversal of the ethnic image of the city is best illustrated by the fact that in 1939 Poles accounted for less than 1% of the population. In 1950 the analogous share applied to the German population of the city.

These more precise data, concerning the demographic-ethnic structure of Wrocław and Szczecin, constitute an illustration for the process that encompassed several hundred towns and a dozen thousand villages, situated on the territory, which was incorporated into Poland owing to the Potsdam decisions. Deportation of Germans and inflow of Polish population entirely reversed the ethnic character of the areas, situated to the East of the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers. This reversal took essentially place at the turn of 1947. A society of quite diversified territorial origins was supposed to build its “small homeland” on the territory completely alien to them. Strong national and religious ties, though, were the premises for the quickly progressing integration processes.⁷⁴

The subsequent period was characterised already by the smaller migration flows. Continuation of settling required reconstruction of the facilities completely destroyed during military operations and burned down on purpose by the still quartering Soviet troops. That is why in 1948 only 62,000 persons were resettled, in 1949 – 60,000, and in 1950 – 17,000. After the settling movement terminated, the primary source of the further population growth was high natural increase, reaching even 30‰. It resulted from the very advantageous age structure – the share of the young was very high among the settlers. This was also the cause of high spatial mobility. It is only starting with 1950 that we can speak of the demise of temporariness and appearance of higher degree of stability.

Conform to the population census carried out in 1950, the territory that Poland obtained owing to the decision taken in Potsdam, was inhabited by 5,936,200 persons, of whom – on the territory of the former Free City of Gdańsk – 334,200

⁷⁴ An article, published in an ample work entitled *Polacy i Niemcy (Poles and Germans)*, contained an extremely well formulated comment on the perception by Poles of the heritage left by the Germans: “This means, actually, that Poles from the Eastern Borderlands and from Central Poland, coming after the war to the lands of Silesia, Pomerania and East Prussia, taken over from the Germans, were settling not the advertised by the propaganda mythical [new] homeland, but rather a concrete ‘alien-land’. Everything was alien: landscape of these areas, aesthetic aspect and symbolic layer of the structures, cultural tissue, forms and degree of industrialisation of these areas and their agricultural development, and, of course, the local history... Yet, the gist of the matter then was not in re-Polonising of these lands in the framework of ‘domestication’ processes, but in the programmed de-Germanising of these territories, by no means ‘regained’, but in the essence ‘gained’, and in Polonisation of the German heritage, built into them. The settlers, flowing in immediately after the war into these territories had themselves no doubts, as this was expressed in daily language practice, that they take over the land and the goods formerly German.” (Zybura, 2003, p. 161). Along the succession of generations this attitude underwent an evolutionary transformation and nowadays, in the consciousness of the youngest generations, born on these territories, this kind of historical perspective became blurred and is treated as quite distant past.

persons. Thus, excluding this small, but strategically important piece of land, the Western and Northern Lands were inhabited by 5,602,100 persons. This was close to three million less than in 1939. The young population structure, though, announced a rapid compensation of these demographic losses. In 1960 this territory was inhabited by 7,800,000 persons, while nowadays (2010) it is the home to around 10 million persons, of whom a vast majority were born after 1950.

The census of 1950 included also the question of territorial origin. The results with this respect were as follows (Kosiński, 1960, p. 8) (Fig. III.16):

– native population	1,165,000 (19.6%)
– re-settlers	2,916,500 (49.1%)
– repatriates and re-emigrants	1,749,700 (29.5%)
– others	105,000 (1.8%)
Total:	5,936,200 (100%)

In the highly valued book, classical by now, devoted to the Western and Northern Lands (*Polska Zachodnia...*, 1961), the data from the here considered population census of 1950 are presented and interpreted. According to the information, provided in the book mentioned, on the territory in question (excluding the area of the former Free City of Gdańsk) 48.8% of the population originated from the areas that belonged to Poland both on 31 August 1939 and in 1950. The second group of population was constituted by persons having inhabited the areas incorporated in 1945 into the USSR, that is – the repatriates from the East. The native population, whose citizenship on 31 August 1939 was German, numbered 1,104,000 persons (see Table III.40).

Table III.40. Population of the Western and Northern Lands according to the territorial origin in 1950

Place of residence on 31 August 1939	Population number on the Western and Northern Lands	% share in the total population of the Western and Northern Lands
Western and Northern Lands	1,104,000	19.7
Territories belonging to Poland both in 1939 and in 1950	2,733,000	48.9
Territories lost to the USSR	1,553,000	27.7
Other countries	152,000	2.7
Unknown	60,000	1.1
Totals	5,602,000	100.0

Source: *Ziemie Zachodnie...* (1961, p. 327).

The newcomers were in vast majority. On the territory of Poland there were in December 1950, 2,137,000 repatriates from the USSR, of whom 1,553,000, i.e. 73%, lived on the Western and Northern Lands. Among those registered in the census of 1950 there were 2,977,000 persons, who declared that in 1939 they lived in the voivodships that have remained Polish despite the boundary

shifts. In the framework of the post-war migrations 13% of this population, i.e. 2,733,000 persons, settled on the Western and Northern Lands.

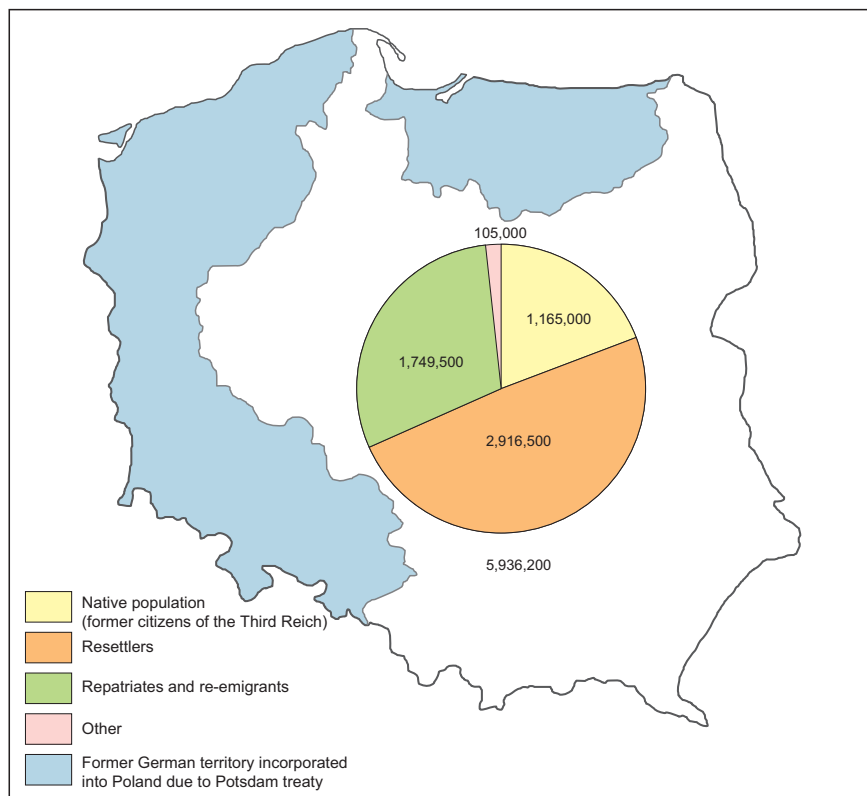


Fig. III.16. Territorial origins of the population of the Regained Lands in 1950
Source: own elaboration.

The distribution of the population according to the former place of residence, or, otherwise, the geographical origin, was quite complicated, but its reasons can in all cases be retraced (see Fig. III.17).

Definite historical-political conditions played a role here, and this was especially apparent in the case of the native population of Polish nationality. The newcomers, who were in a clear majority, originated mainly from the territory, having belonged to Poland between the wars. Most interesting was the distribution of the repatriates coming from the Eastern Borderlands of the 2nd Commonwealth. They were directed to their new places of residence by railways in such a manner as to minimise the transit time. That is why, as this has already been mentioned, the repatriates originating from Podole or Volhynia were directed mainly to Lower Silesia or to Lubusza Land. On the other hand, migrants coming from the regions of Vilna, Grodno or Nowogródek would settle in the former East Prussia and in Pomerania.

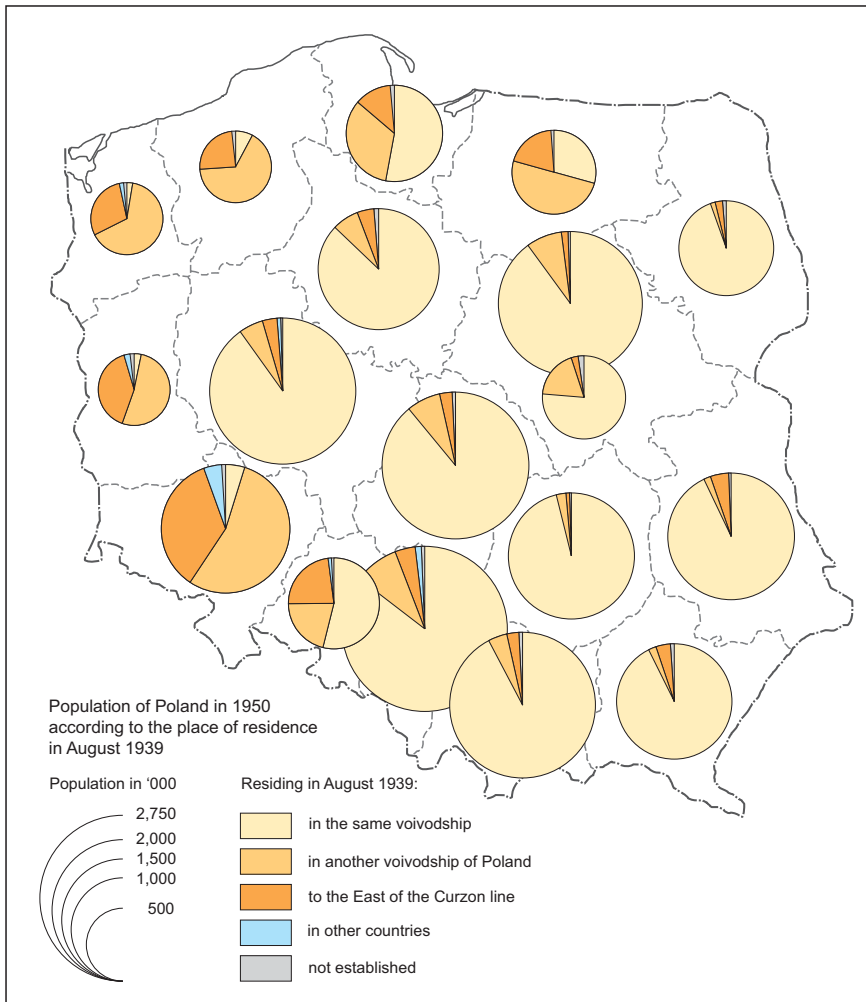


Fig. III.17. Territorial origins of the population of Poland according to voivodships in 1950

Source: own elaboration.

Population, originating from central Poland, was motivated in their migration decisions mainly by the economic reasons. They would move towards the not too far areas, often neighbouring upon their original region of residence. Thus, inhabitants of the capital region of Masovia would usually prefer to move to East Prussia, the closest region. The persons from Greater Poland (Wielkopolska, the region around Poznań) settled in the border counties, which also did not require a longer trip. This phenomenon is well documented by the census data, concerning the matter of territorial origin (Table III.41).

In two voivodships, namely those corresponding to the regions of Upper Silesia and Opole, native population dominated. In the voivodship of Katowice

they accounted for 61.9% of the population, while in the voivodship of Opole – for 54.6%. These were the native Silesians, of whom many had an indifferent attitude towards their nationality, identifying themselves fully neither with the Polish nor with German nationality⁷⁵. An important percentage share of persons having had German citizenship remained in the voivodship of Olsztyn (19.1% of the total population). They constituted the remnants of the ethnic Masurians and Warmians, who, despite using (a dialect of) the Polish language, did not feel very comfortably as the citizens of the Polish state. The former were, in addition, Protestants. The encounter with the newcomers, representing different cultural background, was the reason of their gradual emigration to Germany. Hard economic conditions, as well as discriminatory policies of the central and local authorities, were also motivating to leave Poland (Sakson, 1990, pp. 21–33).

Table III.41. Population of the Western and Northern Lands according to territorial origins in 1950 (in particular voivodships)

Area of the voivodship of	Population of the Western and Northern Lands according to the census of 1950	Of this, persons with location of residence on 31 August 1939 in:						
		Western and Northern Lands	central and southern voivodships	territory ceded to the USSR	France	present territory of Germany	other countries	location of residence not established
Olsztyn	610,173	117,163	352,413	134,199	832	1,778	499	3,339
Gdańsk	208,383	22,702	142,751	36,803	898	1,216	295	3,718
Koszalin	518,354	47,371	335,270	120,370	1,286	4,609	876	8,572
Szczecin	529,295	16,770	344,353	147,526	2,962	8,287	1,708	7,689
Zielona Góra	560,613	17,130	290,921	230,553	2,901	5,649	7,062	6,397
Wrocław	1,698,911	94,149	906,998	593,348	32,062	14,529	37,748	20,077
Opole	809,529	442,490	159,818	192,873	2,162	4,381	2,306	5,439
Poznań	49,355	2,738	30,515	15,183	111	218	96	494
Białystok	70,597	4,884	56,763	8,037	79	140	39	655
Katowice	546,908	338,737	112,997	74,620	11,263	3,363	2,373	3,535
Western and Northern Lands, total	5,602,118	1,104,134	2,732,799	1,553,512	54,576	44,170	53,012	59,915
	100%	19.7%	48.8%	27.7%	1.0%	0.7%	1.0%	1.1%

Source: *Polska Zachodnia...* (1961, p. 329).

⁷⁵ The question of ethnic identification of the Silesian population is the subject of numerous sociological studies, which demonstrate the appearance of very differentiated and variable world-view attitudes, which may even differ significantly within particular families. Information on this issue is provided, in particular, in the reports by Wanatowicz (2004) and Faruga (2004).

Relatively high shares of repatriates from the East were observed among those having settled in the voivodships of Zielona Góra (41%) and Wrocław (34.9%). In all the other voivodships considered, the settlers from central Poland dominated. Smaller territorial units featured high diversity of compositions with this respect. Some villages were inhabited uniquely by the repatriates from the East, in some of the larger towns, e.g. in Wrocław, the stratum of intelligentsia was dominated by persons originating from Lwów or Warsaw. There were among the settlers also the persons having come from Yugoslavia or Romania. On the other hand in Wałbrzych, Zabrze and Bytom numerous Polish coal miners settled, who had worked before the war in the Belgian or French collieries.

The re-settlers, repatriates, re-emigrants and their children born already in the new locations of residence made up in 1950 a population of altogether 4,666,200 persons. These data witness to the scale of the post-war inflow of the population. The few years of the settling processes on the Northern and Western Lands of Poland closed the period of large scale population movements, which were taking place due to political reasons on Polish territories. They lasted almost ten years. In the subsequent period migration processes took on a different character. Their reasons were associated with economic causes and were brought about by the transformations induced by industrialisation and urbanisation.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE POPULATION MOVEMENTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION NUMBER OF THE POST-WAR POLAND AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ITS ETHNIC STRUCTURE

IV.1. Demographic losses of Poland in the period 1939–1945

Immediately after the end of war an attempt was made of determining the demographic losses of Poland. The new authorities established the War Compen-sations Bureau (Polish acronym BOW), which, along with other institutions, elab-orated for January 1947 the report, in which it was estimated that in the years 1939–1945 altogether 6,028,000 Polish citizens died. This estimate did not acco-unt for the persons of German, Ukrainian or Belarusian nationalities. It con-centrated on the losses of Polish and Jewish population, inhabiting on August 31st, 1939, the territory of Poland. Among the victims, according to a very rough approximation, 3 millions were Jews and 3 million were Poles. Verifications of these numbers, carried out later on, confirmed the number of Jews killed, within, of course, a certain, rather small, range of possible error. On the other hand, further analyses led to a much lower number of losses of the Polish popula-tion. Yet, the opinions and the estimates on this matter differ significantly until today¹.

The respective documentation of the BOW states that in the framework of the losses, exceeding 6 million dead, 644,000 persons died due to direct military ope-rations, while 5,384,000 persons died due to the terror from the German occu-pants, of whom in pacifications, executions and death camps 3,577,000 persons were killed, 1,286,000 died in epidemics and due to the exhaustion of the orga-nism, while 521,000 died in the consequence of wounds and fatigue in connection with forced labour. In view of the political conditioning of that time all the war

¹ The article by M. Gniazdowski is devoted to this complex and controversial issue. This article provides the information on the existing documentation of the matter, concerning facts and figures. In another paper the author provides the origins of the estimate of the demographic losses of Poland during the World War II at the level of 6 million. This number was arbitrarily determined by the then undersecretary of state in the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, Jakub Berman, who ordered to use officially, instead of the calculated number of victims of war equal 4.8 million, the number of 6 million. Let us repeat that this estimate was meant to include only Poles and Jews (Gniazdowski, 2006, p. 110).

losses were ascribed to the German occupants. It was not possible to write about the genocide of the Stalinist terror. Further, the calculations referred to did not account for the consequences of the resettlements or deportations.² At the same time, attempt was made to establish, on the basis of personal data, losses according to particular professions. It was namely well known that both the Nazi and the Soviet occupants would liquidate in a purposeful manner Polish intelligentsia. German authorities, in the framework of the so-called *AB* action carried out planned extermination of the Polish social leadership and upper classes. On the other hand, the Soviet occupants, by applying the class-wise criteria, liquidated physically landowners, intelligentsia, Catholic clergy, the bourgeois, as well as owners of any more pronounced wealth. On the basis of quite detailed analyses it was established that during the war 56.9% of lawyers and 38.7% of physicians died. The losses among the clergy were 27% of the pre-war number. The evidence of the purposeful extermination action is constituted by the losses among teachers: 5.1% of the primary school teachers died, compared to 13.1% of the secondary school teachers and 28.5% of the university lecturers. More or less every third person with university education died (Gniazdowski, 2006, p. 23). Attention ought to be paid to the fact that calculations, based on personal data, were quite reliable, but the victims were solely ascribed to the activity of the German occupants.

In 1948 a Commission with the Ministry of Finance verified the previous arbitrary and unreliable estimate of war losses at the level of 6 million people. On the basis of newer, more precise analyses, this Commission decreased the total estimate of the population losses down to 5,085,000, with the breakdown into 550,000 of the victims of military operations, 3 million of victims of genocide, 1,083,000 persons having died in prisons and camps, and 186,000 deaths caused by exhaustion. Hence, the total number of victims was by close to one million lower than in the report of the BOW. In this new total number Jews would account for 3,378,000 victims (which, now, was a clear overestimation), while Poles for 1,706,700 (Gniazdowski, 2006, p. 27). The authors of the new report stated that the demographic losses amounted to 18.1% of the population of Poland in 1939 and in relative terms were the highest among the European countries.

Later on, the syntheses concerning the demographic war losses were put together by the individual scholars. This was, in particular, the subject of study of Cz. Łuczak (1979, pp. 216–217). According to his estimates on the territory of pre-war Poland around 4.5 million of citizens of Polish and Jewish nationality lost their lives due to direct action, while several hundred thousand died due to indirect extermination. Conform to this estimate the losses of population of Polish nationality would amount to 1.5 million. These are the direct and documented losses. The respective numbers do not account for the decrease of the birth rate nor for the increase of natural mortality. Hence, these losses are trea-

² The demographic losses, brought about by the war, were significantly differentiated not only along the ethnic dimension, but also along time and in space. These questions are considered in the collective work, edited by Materski and Szarota (2009).

ted as a minimum estimate.³ Similar calculations were performed for the estimation of the losses of Polish military forces, fighting against the Nazi German troops on all fronts of the World War II and in the occupied Poland. We have already indicated that in September 1939 approximately 66,000 Polish officers and privates died when fighting against the German and Soviet armies. It can be assumed that 80% of these losses were constituted by the ethnic Poles. In the regular detachments of the Polish army, which fought on the western front, the losses amounted to 43,400 of the dead, while on the eastern front – to 48,400 (*Historia...*, 2003, p. 311). If we add to this the participants of the Warsaw Uprising (18,000), as well as those killed in the resistance movement actions within the territory of Poland, the estimate for the total losses in the Polish armed forces comes up to 239,800 persons killed and having died of wounds (Zwoliński, 1989, p. 74). This estimate does still not account for the Polish officers murdered by the NKVD in Katyń, Kharkiv and Tver, and in other places on the territory of the USSR.⁴

It can be concluded on the basis of various estimates, provided here, that the losses of the Polish civilian population, due to the terror of the occupants, extermination and direct military activities during the World War II amounted to between 1.3 and 1.5 million persons.⁵ The deadly losses would often take place during forced movements of the population of various characters and territorial reaches. They were not accounted for in the migration balances, even though they were actually usually associated with various territorial movements of population.

³ Many Polish scholars question these calculations and argument that the direct losses of the Polish population did not amount to 1.5 million dead, but to much more. The most often quoted numbers range between 2 and 3 million. Thus, for instance, one can refer to the detailed data, concerning demographic losses of the Polish population, provided in the study by W. Grabowski. This author defines the number of victims of war according to years and six categories. Conform to the data provided in the study referred to, in the period 1939/1940, 504,000 persons of Polish nationality were killed or died, in the period 1940/1941 – 353,000 persons, 1941/1942 – 407,000 persons, 1942/1943 – 541,000 persons, 1943/1944 – 681,000 persons, and 1944/1945 – 270,000 persons. The total biological losses brought about by World War II were estimated as equal 2,770,000 persons (Grabowski, 2009, pp. 29–30).

⁴ In all these calculations, though, Poles are not accounted for, who fought in the *Wehrmacht* forces. By the establishment of the so-called nationality lists on the territories incorporated into the Third Reich, some 230,000 Poles were recruited to the *Wehrmacht* against their own will. Many of them died in combat during the World War II. Some of them succeeded to desert and join the allied forces. In the final stage of the war in the IInd Polish Corps in Italy 35,000 Polish soldiers served, who had been formerly the soldiers of *Wehrmacht* (Grabowski, 2009, p. 68). Soviet authorities, after the conquest of the eastern part of Poland, carried out the enrolment to the Red Army. It encompassed many Poles. Only few of them found their way to the ranks of the 1st and 2nd Polish Peoples' Armies, organised by the Polish communists in the USSR. Numerous Poles died, as well, as the soldiers of the American, Canadian or Australian armed forces.

⁵ In conclusion of his study Gniazdowski (2006, p. 39) states: "Taking into account these two corrections, one should lower the estimated number of victims of the German occupation, quoted after Czesław Łuczak, from 5.5 million to 5.2–5.3 million, with the estimate of the number of victims among the ethnically Polish population decreased down to 1.4 million. The corrected data still refer to an enormous scale of the losses (roughly 15% of the total population) and remain the highest, in relative terms, among the countries, occupied by the Third Reich, especially as also abroad the new estimates of the dimensions of the losses borne bring corrections of the earlier calculations (for comparison: the Soviet Union – 12.4%, Greece – 10.8%, Luxembourg – 1.6%, France and Belgium – 1.2% each, The Netherlands – 2.4%, Czechoslovakia – 2.1%)."

IV.2. The scale of migrations during and after the war

The present report shows in the chronological setting different forced migrations, caused by political reasons. Their motive forces were the authorities of the then German state, the Soviet state, and, to quite a limited degree, the authorities of the post-war Polish state. With respect to the latter – the respective undertakings of the final stage of the war had also full acceptance and approval of the two western powers, that is, the United States and Great Britain. The victims of these mostly centrally planned resettlement actions were Jews, Poles, Germans and Ukrainians, and, to a marginal degree the representatives of other nations, who have been present during the World War II on the Polish territories.

The politically-based population migrations taking place on the Polish territories, presented here in the consecutive chapters, had no precedent in the world history. This is true both for the scale of the population movements and for their demographic complexity. These large-scale movements started on September 1st, 1939, when German army attacked Poland. One of the objectives of the aggression was to conquer new settling areas for the German population, as well as to exterminate and displace the nations not satisfying the racial criteria. Ultimately, after five years of bloodshed, total defeat of the Nazi Germany followed. It brought about the exodus of more than a dozen million Germans from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and the change of the political boundaries of Germany and Poland. In the meantime, though, population movements took place of the character unknown until then. They were selective in ethnic terms. In the consecutive stages of conflict they affected different ethnic (national, racial, religious, etc.) groups of population.

This is not to say that only migrations impacted upon the demographic situation. During the entire period of war enormous numbers of deaths among the civilian population and the military took place. At the same time, there were also more usual demographic processes going on: births, natural deaths, and the resulting natural increase or decrease. Yet, population movements largely impacted upon the general demographic balances. Several shifts of political boundaries brought about each time appearance of a large number of forced migrants.

Close to 30 million people were directly affected by these movements on the territory contained between the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers on the one hand and the eastern boundary of the pre-war Poland on the other. This number does not account for the movements of the military, that is – the several million soldiers, primarily of the German and Soviet troops. Exception in the present study was made for the interned Polish POWs of the 1939 and the Soviet POWs exterminated by the Germans in Poland, for whom a more detailed analysis was carried out. Analysis was in principle performed for the civilian population. Further, the freewill, socio-economically motivated migrations, not associated directly to war, were not accounted for. Attention was concentrated mainly on the forced population movements. Despite this limitation, the overall scale of the poli-

tically conditioned migrations is extremely high. It is perhaps worthwhile to mention the most important of the movements, just in order to illustrate the intensity of the respective processes, movements and deportations, which took place on the Polish lands, namely:

– Polish POWs after the September 1939 campaign	0.7 million
– Polish population deported from the areas incorporated into the Third Reich	1.0 million
– deportations of the population under Soviet occupation in the years 1939–1941	1.0 million
– inflow of the German population into the occupied areas of Poland	1.3 million
– Polish citizens sent to the Third Reich	3.0 million
– Jewish population transported to the places of extermination	4.0 million
– Soviet POWs transported to the death camps	0.8 million
– inhabitants of Warsaw deported after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising	0.6 million
– flight of the German population before the approaching Soviet Army	5.0–6.0 million
– resettlement of the Polish population from the areas lost to the Soviet Union	2.2 million
– deportation of the German population resettled to Potsdam Germany	3.2 million
– resettlement of the Ukrainian population to the Soviet Union	0.5 million
– return home of the Polish population from the West	2.0 million
– settling of the so-called Regained Lands by the Polish population	4.0 million
– deportation of the Polish and Ukrainian population deep into the USSR	0.25 million
– resettlement of the Jewish population to Western and Northern Lands	0.15 million
– emigration of the Jewish population after the war to Palestine	0.25 million.

The here mentioned movements, referred to in a general and incomplete account, of mass and mostly forced character, having taken place over not quite 10 years, were selective in terms of the nationality of the persons relocated. This was closely linked with the ethnic structure of the areas, encompassed by the resettlements and depended upon the current policies of the authorities in Berlin, Moscow, and, in the final phase of the war – also in Warsaw, the authorities, which in a given time period were capable of deciding of the fate of people who were subordinated to them in political, ideological and administrative terms. The rough estimates provided, and the calculations that were subject to statistical and substantive analysis, imply that the largest national groups among the resettled were constituted by Poles (13–14 million), followed by Germans (11–12 million), Jews (5 million), and Ukrainians (1 million). The remaining ethnic groups

of the civilian displaced persons (Gypsies, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Russians) were much smaller. One should regard this kind of synthetic balances with a definite care and criticism, since each of the individual processes had a different image, and they are incomparable as to their moral, legal, political, geographic and organisational-logistic aspects.

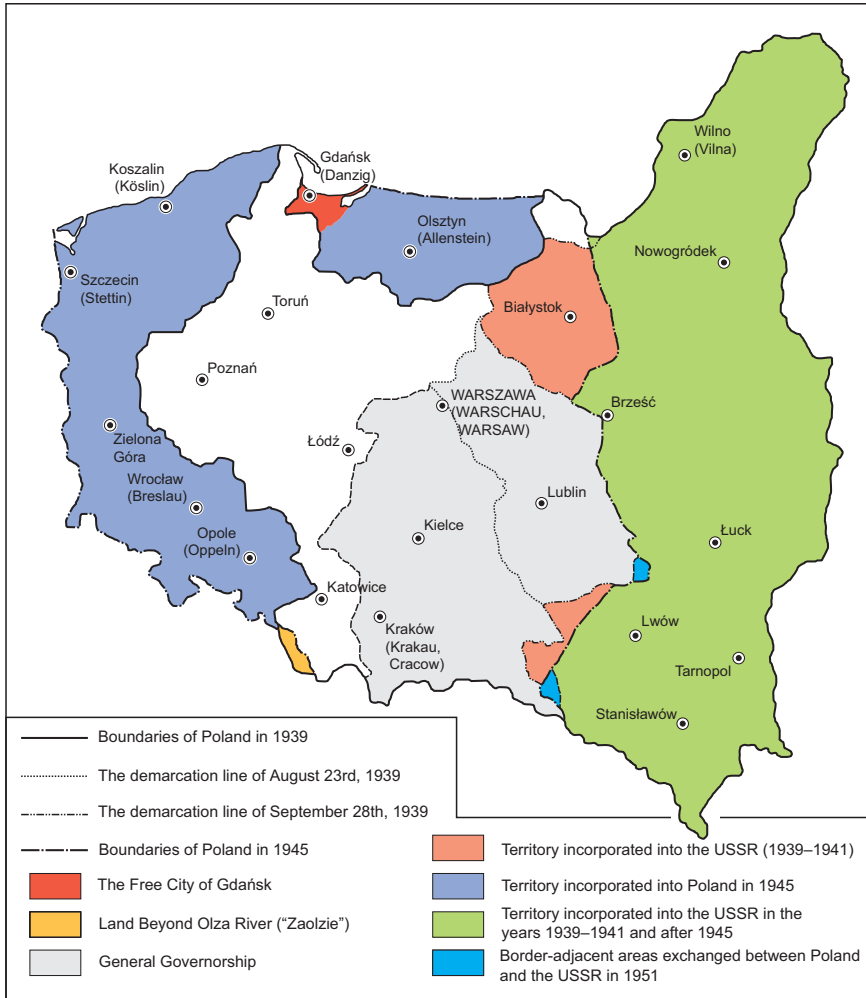


Fig. IV.1. Boundary changes on the Polish territories during the World War II
Source: own elaboration.

Further, the statistical assessment of the here listed migration movements requires great care in interpretation. The very same person could be subject to more than one deportation and/or resettlement. Thus, for instance, the repatriates from the Soviet Union were at the same time the settlers populating the Regai-

ned Lands. This, of course, does not change the fact of large-scale character of the demographic phenomenon considered. Millions of people were forced to abandon their previous places of residence and were subject to ruthless terror, including unconditional deportation. For many of them, and in case of Jews for almost all, the destination was death. In an explicit manner this purpose was served by the extermination or isolation camps, distributed over the space stretching from the river Rhine in the West to the Magadan in the Far East. These forced population movements were as a rule associated with the shifting political boundaries, which changed several times over between 1939 and 1945 (see Fig. 23).

In virtually all cases the population of a definite nationality had to follow the arbitrary political verdicts imposed. The binding decisions concerning the fate of millions of people were taken by Hitler or Stalin, and in the final stage of war the successive decisions were taken in Yalta or Potsdam. These were ultimate decisions, and no right of appeal could serve, numerous human communities had just to follow them. Consequently, in the effect of these diverse movements of Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians or Belarusians, taking place in various directions, an entirely new demographic and ethnic situation of the Polish state took shape.

IV.3. The balance of changes in the population of Poland in the years 1939–1950

Poland, as of 31 August 1939, had the territory of 389,700 sq. km and population of 35,339,000. After the World War II the re-established Polish state had 312,700 sq. km of area, contained within completely different political boundaries. The population census carried out on 14 February 1946 yielded the population number on the new territory equal only 23,929,000. The change of boundaries, demographic losses, as well as large-scale migration processes resulted in the decrease of the population number by 11,409,200 persons. Sure, the difference indicated does in principle not apply to the same territory nor to the same population. That is also why without a more precise territorial-statistical analysis this number by itself says only a little about the true demographic transformations, which took place over not quite seven years. Simultaneously, namely, essential changes of the ethnic structure took place. It is only a precise balance, put together with respect to each of the nationalities involved that would allow for formulation of definite conclusions as to the geographical direction and scale of demographic transformations. The analysis of population movements, presented in particular chapters of the report, these movements being selective in ethnic terms, provides assistance in establishing a full demographic balance of the country. The issue is not only in showing the causes of the so deep change of the population number in absolute terms, but – first of all – in presentation of the degree, to which the losses affected particular ethnic groups.

In order to fulfil the condition of substantive adequacy, the analysis must refer to the territories of pre-war and post-war Poland. This requires a separate treatment

of the areas that belonged to Poland both before and after the war, those in the East that were lost by Poland due to war to the advantage of the Soviet Union, and those in the West that Poland acquired at the cost of Germany. Each of these areas requires carrying out of a separate demographic and ethnic analysis.

For the area of pre-war Poland we dispose of an official statistical documentation, elaborated in 1941 in London, in which the population of the country is presented according to the state as of 31 August 1939, within the then valid political boundaries, that is – the ones established after the defeat of Poland in September 1939, and having persisted until 22 June 1941. These data provide the so-called language structure of the population of Poland, which, however, cannot be fully identified with the ethnic structure (Table IV.1).

Table IV.1. Population of Poland according to mother tongue on the occupied areas (as of 31 August 1939)

Occupied territories – – breakdown as of 1 January 1941	Totals	Mother tongue (population numbers in '000)								
		Polish	German	Yiddish and Hebrew	Ukrainian and Ruthenian	Belarusian	Russian	Czech	Lithuanian	other and not specified
Poland	35,339	24,388	803	2,916	4,890	1,127	155	107	92	861
Areas occupied by Germany, subdivided into:	22,140	19,114	714	1,807	361	4	21	72	8	39
– Reich ¹	10,568	9,221	653	582	4	1	11	71	8	17
– General Governorship	11,542	9,863	61	1,225	357	3	10	1	0	22
– Slovakia	30	30	0	0	–	–	–	–	–	0
Areas occupied by the USSR, subdivided into:	13,199	5,274	89	1,109	4,529	1,123	134	35	84	822
– Lithuania	537	371	1	71	0	14	17	0	61	2
– Belarus	4,733	2,320	6	426	55	1,105	90	0	23	708 ²
– Ukraine	7,929	2,583	82	612	4,474	4	27	35	0	112

¹ including the so-called “Beyond the Olza-river” area disputed between Poland and Bohemia.

² the Belarusian population, having declared the so-called “local language”.

Source: *Maty Rocznic...* (1941, p. 9).

The national-level data do not reflect appropriately the regional specificity, which was highly complex from the spatial point of view. The complexity of situation was particularly high on the eastern territories of the 2nd Commonwealth. Information on the population of Poland on the eve of the outbreak of the World War II is fully reliable and does not give rise to doubts. On the other hand, using the language criterion for purposes of estimating ethnic structures gives

rise to essential reservations. According to the common opinion of the demographers such an approach to some extent overestimated the number of Polish population at the cost of the ethnic minorities, and so it requires a definite verification.

The statistical data presented show the state of population of Poland at the instant of the outbreak of World War II. After the end of war a new Poland emerged, within the completely changed political boundaries. Thus, the information presented has a purely historical meaning, and its significance for the further analyses is limited. All kinds of demographic balances, in order to fulfil the requirements of the spatial comparability, must refer to the same territory. This kind of calculations was performed by two Polish geographers (Dziewoński, Kosiński, 1967). They do not give rise to reservations from the statistical and substantive points of view. The authors mentioned made use of the data from the Polish census of 1931, containing information on the area, which remained Polish after the war, and the data from the German census of 1933, which provided information concerning the population on the territory, which, after the decision taken in Potsdam, was lost by Germany to the advantage of Poland. Information on the population is presented by the authors mentioned according to the 17 provincial units that functioned in Poland in 1950. This required quite meticulous calculations, but gave the possibility of comparing the pre-war data (1931/1933) with the post-war ones (1946, 1950). Thus, the territory of the present-day Poland was inhabited in 1931/1933, according to these calculations, by 29,931,000 persons, while in 1946 – by 23,930,000 persons, and in 1950 – by 25,008,000 persons. The decrease of the population number over the period analysed (1931/1933–1950) was very high and amounted to close to 5 million inhabitants. This loss was clearly differentiated in the territorial setting, as shown in the setting of the post-war provincial units (see Table IV.2).

Population number decreased, due to excess mortality (both natural and caused by war), outweighing the birth rates, as well as due to migration-related losses, on virtually the entire territory of the Polish state and all of the provincial units between 1931/33 and 1946. The biggest decrease took place in the voivodships situated in the Western and Northern Lands, inhabited until the war mostly by the German population. After the Germans had been relocated, the numerous towns and villages of these areas emptied. Population of Polish nationality only gradually moved into them. This situation is well illustrated by the data for 1946. On the areas of the post-war Szczecin, Zielona Góra or Olsztyn voivodships less than half, or even 1/3 of population remained. Decrease of the population numbers on the so-called ancient territories resulted from the significant war losses and the negative migration balance. From these voivodships the settlers originated, who would move to the so-called Regained Lands. The population decreases in the voivodships of Lublin and Rzeszów, on the other hand, were the result of the resettlement of the Ukrainian population. Yet, definitely the biggest changes of the population numbers took place on the Western and Northern Lands (see Table IV.3).

In addition, one should account for the fact that adoption of the state as of 1939 for comparison rather than that of 1931/33 would have shown even bigger

demographic losses. They were in any case extremely high, amounting between 1931/1933 and 1946 to around 6 million people. The increase of the population number between 1946 and 1950 by more than one million only to a very limited degree compensated for the acute war losses. It was only between 1950 and 1960 that, owing to high natural increase, the state from the beginning of the 1930s has been restored.

Table IV.2. Changes in population numbers on the post-war territory of Poland 1931/1933–1950

Voivodships of	Population number			Population increase or decrease 1931/1933–1950	
	1931/1933	1946	1950	number	%
Warsaw	3,571,000	2,688,000	2,846,000	-725,000	-20.3
Bydgoszcz	1,576,000	1,458,000	1,451,000	-125,000	-7.9
Poznań	2,317,000	2,086,000	2,105,000	-212,000	-9.1
Lodz	2,386,000	2,015,000	2,074,000	-312,000	-13.0
Kielce	1,860,000	1,702,000	1,633,000	-227,000	-12.2
Lublin	1,983,000	1,754,000	1,610,000	-373,000	-18.8
Białystok	1,142,000	918,000	955,000	-187,000	-16.3
Olsztyn	1,012,000	442,000	689,000	-323,000	-31.9
Gdańsk	1,037,000	732,000	930,000	-107,000	-10.3
Koszalin	789,000	585,000	518,000	-271,000	-34.3
Szczecin	980,000	308,000	529,000	-451,000	-46.0
Zielona Góra	900,000	347,000	561,000	-339,000	-37.7
Wrocław	2,589,000	1,769,000	1,699,000	-890,000	-34.3
Opole	1,039,000	792,000	810,000	-229,000	-22.0
Katowice	2,746,000	2,490,000	2,722,000	-24,000	-0.9
Cracow	2,058,000	2,005,000	2,113,000	+55,000	+2.7
Rzeszów	1,819,000	1,535,000	1,368,000	-451,000	-24.7
Population centrally registered	127,000	304,000	395,000	+268,000	+211.0
Totals	29,931,000	23,930,000	25,008,000	-4,923,000	-16.4

Source: Dziewoński, Kosiński (1967, pp. 130–131).

The here presented statistical information constitutes the starting point for the proper demographic balance, in which biological and migration-related losses ought to be treated separately. These losses affected to an uneven degree Polish, German and Jewish populations. For this reason separate analysis should also be carried out for each of these ethnic groups. In order to ensure a higher degree of precision the period 1931/1933–1939 ought not to be taken into account, during which a high natural increase was observed, both in western and central Poland, and in eastern Germany. Careful interpretation ought to be applied

to the data for the period 1946–1950, formally the period of peace, but in reality a period characterised by a high instability of the political situation. Very significant tensions existed then in Poland, assuming the form of the military conflict. At the same time, extremely important transformations were taking place, which brought, ultimately the ethnic homogeneity of the Polish western territories. According to the contemporary terminology, this period could be referred to as the period of the so-called ethnic purges. So, during a couple of years after the war the ethnic minorities (Germans, Ukrainians) were removed from the country, the ones that could potentially in some more or less distant future, aim at the territorial disintegration of the Polish state.

Table IV.3. Population number changes on the post-war territory of Poland 1931/1933–1950

Territory	Population number			Population decrease 1931/1933–1950	
	1931/1933	1946	1950	number	%
Ancient territories	21,400,000	18,843,000	18,977,000	-2,423,000	-11.3
Regained Lands	8,531,000	5,087,000	6,031,000	-2,500,000	-29.4
Totals	29,931,000	23,930,000	25,008,000	-4,923,000	-16.4

Source: Dziewoński, Kosiński (1967, pp. 75 and 81).

It is obvious that in order to arrive at the proper demographic balance, year 1939 ought to be assumed as the starting point. The other important time instant is linked with the termination of the military activities in Europe, that is – the year 1945. For the latter, very important time instant, we dispose of quite reliable data, since in February 1946 the population census was carried out on the territory of Poland, in which the ethnic issues were accounted for. Immediately after the war large scale population movements took place, caused by the shifts of the boundaries. These movements terminated altogether at the turn of the 1950s. When they ended, another population census was carried out in Poland in 1950, showing the state of the population in conditions of the already relatively stable population conditions. Taking as the starting point the here mentioned time instants (1939, 1945, 1950), Polish demographer K. Piesowicz (1988a, b) developed appropriate estimations, with the aim of establishing the demographic balance of Poland between 1939 and 1950. In view of the professional competence of Piesowicz and consideration of the most important component elements of the balance, his report might constitute the proper starting point for the final conclusions of synthetic character.

The author mentioned estimates approximately the population number of Poland in 1939 as equal roughly 35 million. Based on quite sophisticated statistical procedure he then estimates the demographic potential of Poland in 1945 at 22.2 million, and explains the causal factors that resulted in the population number of Poland at 25 million, according to the population census of 1950. Even

though the estimations quoted are assessed positively by the specialists, they should still be treated with quite a care.⁶

In his calculations, K. Piesowicz considers, first, all the more important political migrations, then the natural increase or decrease, and the boundary shifts. Two separate demographic balances were put together – for the entire population, and for the three most important national groups (Polish, Jewish and German). The former balance concerns the period of war (1939–1945). This balance, though, is not strictly comparable and not quite adequate from the territorial point of view. Thus, for the year 1939 the estimate concerns the territory of the pre-war Poland, while for the final year of the war, 1945, Piesowicz refers in his estimate to the territory of post-war Poland. During this period the population of the Polish state decreased by 12.8 million (see Table IV.4).

The data, shown in Table IV.4, do not fully correspond – and frequently are inconsistent – with the statistical data quoted in the present report. This fact results from several reasons, both objective and subjective. K. Piesowicz prepared his report relatively long ago. He published it in conditions of a rigorous censorship. He could not account in full for the Soviet repressions. At that time, certain myths and false opinions, concerning the magnitude of the demographic losses, caused by war, were deeply rooted in the public opinion. Piesowicz underestimated a bit the pre-war number of the Jewish population in Poland, while overestimating significantly the biological losses of the Polish population. This, however, does not change the fact that the data quoted, despite their debatable precision, constitute a valuable statistical material.

The subsequent demographic balance, put together for the period 1945–1950 does not give rise to methodological nor substantive reservations. It refers to the territory of the present-day Polish state. And it shows an interesting process taking place in the post-war years. A radical decrease of the numbers of population of ethnic minorities took place. In effect of the large-scale population movements Poland was becoming a mono-ethnic country (see Table IV.5).

The scale of the ethnic changes that took place between the year 1945 and 1950 is well illustrated by the fact that on the territory of the Polish state that has appeared on the basis of the decision, taken by the three great powers after the Third Reich capitulated, the population of the Polish nationality, accounting in 1945 for 80% of the total population number, in 1950 attained close to 98%. Even if we admit definite, visible deformations, that the author quoted could not avoid, the tendencies of the transformations in the ethnic structure are presented in the study referred to in full conformity with the real course of the respective processes.

In the analysis of the issues of ethnic changes, which have been taking place in the period of occupation and in the post-war years, one should once again return to the shape of the political boundaries. This shall allow for the verification of the not fully precise calculations, concerning ethnic divisions, contained in the study of K. Piesowicz. Establishment of the Polish eastern boundary accor-

⁶ Similar synthetic demographic balances, related to the period of World War II, were also calculated by Holzer (1994) and Łuczak (1994).

ding to the Curzon line brought highly significant consequences and resulted in the large-scale population translocations.

Table IV.4. Approximate estimates of the balance of changes in the population of Poland in the years 1939–1945

Items	Populations (in million ¹)				
	totals	according to nationalities			
		Polish	Jewish	German	other
1. Population of Poland in August 1939 within the boundaries of that time	35.0	24.3	3.2	0.8	6.7
– on the ethnic areas ²	23.5	20.1	2.0	0.7	0.7
– on the eastern areas ³	11.5	4.2	1.2	0.1	6.0
2. Natural increase in the years 1939–1944	1.2	0.9	–	–	0.3
3. Potential state as of May 1945 (1+2)	36.2	25.2	3.2	0.8	7.0
4. Biological war losses	6.0	3.1	2.8	–	0.1
5. Deportations to the territory of Germany	2.3	2.1	–	–	0.2
6. War emigration ⁴	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.6	–
7. Population having remained outside of the Polish territory due to boundary changes	8.7	2.7	–	–	6.0
8. Total direct war-related losses (4+5+6+7)	18.5	8.5	3.1	0.6	6.3
9. Pre-war population, present within the boundaries of Poland at the end of war (3–8)	17.7	16.7	0.1	0.2	0.7
10. Population having remained on the Regained Lands at the instant of end of war	4.5	1.1	–	3.4	–
11. Population total	22.2	17.8	0.1	3.6	0.7

¹ precision of one decimal point, i.e. 100,000 persons.

The author quoted here, in view of the then censorship, took the designations given in the table for the following areas:

² the territory occupied by Germany;

³ the territory occupied by the Soviet Union;

⁴ deportations to the East, carried out by the NKVD.

Source: Piesowicz (1987, pp. 107–108); *Historia Polski ...* (1993, p. 197).

The second issue is associated with the division into two occupation zones. The eastern boundary of Poland, established after the World War II is not fully conform – as it was already explained in the introductory chapter – with the demarcation line adopted in the agreement reached in September 1939 between Ribbentrop and Molotov. An appropriate correction should be made with this respect and this part of the population of Poland should be accounted for that lived to the West of the Curzon line and thus remained in Poland after the war. The territories to the East of the Curzon line were irrevocably included after 1945

in the Soviet Union. The ultimate effect of this quite labour consuming statistical procedure is shown in Table IV.6.

Table IV.5. Rough estimate of the balance of changes in the population of Poland in the years 1945–1950

Items	Populations (in million ¹)				
	totals	according to nationalities			
		Polish	Jewish	German	other
1. Population of Poland at the instant of end of war	22.2	17.8	0.1	3.6	0.7
2. Natural increase in 1945	0.1	0.1	–	–	–
3. Repatriation and resettlement to Poland in 1945	3.1	3.0	0.1	–	–
– from the USSR	1.5	1.4	0.1	–	–
– from Germany	1.5	1.5	–	–	–
– from other countries	0.1	0.1	–	–	–
4. Resettlements and emigration from Poland in 1945	1.1	–	–	0.8	0.3
5. Population of Poland on the day of the census, 14.02.1946 in the original version	23.9	20.9	–	2.3	0.4
– in the corrected version (1+2+3–4)	24.3	20.9	0.2	2.8	0.4
6. Natural increase in the years 1946–1950	2.1	2.1	–	–	–
7. Repatriation and resettlement to Poland in the years 1946–1950	1.3	1.2	0.1	–	–
– from the USSR	0.7	0.6	0.1	–	–
– from Germany	0.5	0.5	–	–	–
– from other countries	0.1	0.1	–	–	–
8. Re-emigration to Poland in the years 1946–1950	0.2	0.2	–	–	–
9. Resettlements and emigration from Poland in the years 1946–1950	2.9	–	0.1	2.6	0.2
10. Population of Poland according to the census of 3.12.1950 (5+6+7+8–9)	25.0	24.4	0.2	0.2	0.2

¹ precision of one decimal point, i.e. 100,000 persons.

Note: the original terminology was brought back, introduced by the author in view of the censorship.

Source: Piesowicz (1987, pp. 107–108); *Historia Polski ...* (1993, p. 198).

Thus, on the eve of the outbreak of the World War II, the areas, which remained Polish after the war, were inhabited by 23,482,800 persons, of whom 19,655,200 were Poles. On the territories that Poland lost after the war to the advantage of the Soviet Union, 3,474,200 Poles lived in 1939.

The territories of the Third German Reich and the Free City of Gdańsk, which were incorporated after the war into Poland, were in 1933 inhabited by

8,531,000 persons, while in 1939 – by 8,855,000 persons. We have already mentioned the difficulties with estimation of the number of Polish population inhabiting these areas. Moreover, this also makes it difficult to account for the later fate of this population and the eventual change of the ethnic option. During the period analysed and just after the war a Polish minority of roughly one million existed on these areas. Other ethnic minorities were so small that they can be not accounted for.

Table IV.6. Ethnic structure of the population of Poland (as of 31 August 1939)

Nationality	Population numbers					
	to the East of		to the West of		totals	
	the boundary line of 16 August 1945					
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Poles ¹	3,474,200	29.3	19,655,200	83.7	23,129,400	65.5
Ukrainians ²	4,896,600	41.3	657,500	2.8	5,554,100	15.7
Jews ³	1,102,600	9.3	2,254,300	9.6	3,356,900	9.5
Belarusians ⁴	2,003,700	16.9	140,900	0.6	2,144,600	6.1
Germans	94,600	0.8	727,900	3.1	822,500	2.3
Other nationalities	284,500	2.4	47,000	0.2	331,500	0.9
Total	11,856,200	100.0	23,482,800	100.0	35,339,000	100.0

¹ It was assumed that the persons of Roman Catholic religion declaring Polish as mother tongue are Polish.

² The persons of Christian Orthodox or Greek Catholic religion, living in South-eastern Poland were assumed to be Ukrainian.

³ In the estimation of the number of persons of Jewish nationality the religious criterion was treated as more important than the mother tongue.

⁴ The persons of Orthodox religion, residing in the north-eastern Poland (except for the Russians) were considered to be Belarusians. Likewise, the persons declaring "local speech" were also assumed to be Belarusians.

Sources: own calculations and *Drugi powszechny spis...* (1934); *Mały Rocznik...* (1941).

In order to proceed with an adequate demographic balance, we should determine the potential and the ethnic structure of the population over the entire area, which made up the territory of Poland after the war. This area, situated between the Curzon line in the East and the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers in the West, split up at that time between Poland, Germany and the Free City of Gdańsk, was inhabited in 1931/1933 by 29,931,000 persons, and in 1939 by 32,337,800 persons, whose nationalities were as follows:

Poles	– 20,655,200	(63.9%)
Germans	– 8,582,900	(26.5%)
Jews	– 2,254,300	(7.0%)
Ukrainians	– 657,500	(2.0%)
Belarusians	– 140,900	(0.4%)
Other nationalities	– 47,000	(0.2%)
Total	– 32,337,800	(100.0%).

The post-war population census in Poland, carried out on 14 February 1946, showed, as mentioned already, the population number equal 23,929,800. Thus, the population of this territory decreased between 1939 and 1946 by 8,408,000 persons. Since we deal with the same territory, we can speak of demographic decrease caused by war. This decrease was brought about both by the direct war losses and by the migration movements caused by deportations. Consequently, essential changes of the ethnic structure took place (Table IV.7).

Table IV.7. Ethnic structure of the population inhabiting the territory of post-war Poland in 1939 and 1946

Nationalities	1939		1946	
	number	%	number	%
Poles	20,655,200	63.9	20,520,200	85.7
Germans	8,582,900	26.5	2,288,300	9.6
Jews	2,254,300	7.0	70,000 ¹	0.3
Ukrainians	657,500	2.0	220,200 ²	0.9
Belarusians	140,900	0.4	116,500 ³	0.5
Other nationalities	47,000	0.2	10,700	0.1
Persons in the course of verification process	–	–	417,400	1.7
Total	32,337,800	100.0	23,929,800 ⁴	98.8

¹ Population of non-Polish nationality, residing in the voivodships of Rzeszów and Lublin.

² Estimated data, most probably underestimates.

³ Population of non-Polish nationality, residing in the voivodship of Białystok.

⁴ In this census 286,500 persons had their nationality not established.

Sources: own calculations and *Powszechny sumaryczny spis...* (1947).

In view of the fact that the census took place in conditions of on-going resettlement movements, it does not reflect a fully stable situation. The relatively stable situation appeared only through the results of the subsequent census, carried out in 1950. It took place after the completion of the resettlement of the Germans and the mass inflow of the repatriates and re-emigrants to Poland. A comparison of its results with the pre-war situation shows demographic and ethnic transformations as well as the scale of movements of Polish population (Hejger, 2008).

The census of 1950 had one important shortcoming of the lack of information on the ethnic composition of the country's population. The data provided are only estimates, quoted after the official statistical sources of that time, which are not fully reliable. This does not, though, change the overall image: Poland became an ethnically homogeneous country, in which ethnic minorities started to play just a marginal role (Table IV.8).

The change of the ethnic structure of Poland had not only demographic and statistical consequences, but also the territorial ones. The vast areas of Pomerania, Lower Silesia, Lubusza, or the majority of East Prussia, had until 1945 had

Table IV.8. Ethnic structure of the population inhabiting the territory of post-war Poland in 1939 and 1950

Nationalities	1939		1950 ¹	
	number	%	number	%
Poles	20,655,200	63.9	24,448,000	97.8
Germans	8,582,900	26.5	170,000	0.7
Jews	2,254,300	7.0	50,000	0.2
Ukrainians	657,500	2.0	150,200	0.6
Belarusians	140,900	0.4	160,000	0.6
Other nationalities	47,000	0.2	30,000	0.1
Total	32,337,800	100.0	25,008,000	100.0

¹ Ethnic structure for 1950 was provided in an approximate manner on the basis of the contemporary estimates, lowering the numbers of ethnic minorities (especially of the German minority).

Sources: own calculations and *Mały Rocznik...* (1941, p. 9); *Powszechny Spis...* (1952).

Table IV.9. Ethnic structures of Poland as of 31 August 1939 and 3 December 1950

Nationalities	1939		1950 ¹	
	number	%	number	%
Poles	23,129,400	65.5	24,448,000	97.8
Ukrainians	5,554,100	15.7	150,000	0.7
Jews	3,356,900	9.5	50,000	0.2
Belarusians	2,144,600	6.1	160,200	0.6
Germans	822,500	2.3	170,000	0.6
Other nationalities	331,500	0.9	30,000	0.1
Total	35,339,000	100.0	25,008,000	100.0

¹ Ethnic structure for 1950 was provided in an approximate manner on the basis of the contemporary estimates, lowering the numbers of ethnic minorities (especially of the German minority).

Sources: own calculations and *Mały Rocznik* (1941, p. 9); *Powszechny Spis...* (1952).

a German character. Following several centuries of the German expansion, associated with the Germanising of the Polish population, World War II brought the catastrophe of all the pan-German plans, known through the slogan of “*Drang nach Osten*”. Germans not only lost the areas conquered in the 18th and 19th centuries, but the German-Slavic boundary moved far to the West, up to the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers⁷. The territorial acquisitions in the West were

⁷ Questions, related to the origins and the geopolitical consequences of the establishment of the Polish western border on Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers, have been extensively treated in

linked for Poland with the simultaneous loss of the eastern territories, which constituted a very important element of the Polish national consciousness. Without going into details of these problems, which exceed the frames of the present report, it is perhaps worthwhile to present a comparison of the demographic and ethnic structures of the pre-war Poland in its boundaries of 31 August 1939 and the post-war Poland, shaped after the war due to decision taken in Yalta and Potsdam (Table IV.9).

IV.4. Geographical and geopolitical consequences of the boundary shifts and population migrations

In effect of the political decisions, taken by the victorious powers, shifts of the political boundaries took place. They brought about large-scale migration movements. In distinction from the Treaty of Versailles, where efforts were made to determine the boundaries along the lines of ethnic divisions, a completely different principle was applied after the World War II. At the conferences in Yalta and Potsdam the boundaries of states were determined in an arbitrary manner, and the populations of particular nationalities were to adjust to the consequences of this verdict. The new political boundaries were supposed to become, at the same time, the new ethnic divisions. German population was to be entirely relocated from the areas to the East of Odra and Nysa Łużycka. Polish population was meant to replace the Germans. And this is what actually happened. The fact had far-reaching demographic and cultural, but also geopolitical consequences.

Population number of the Polish state decreased between 1939 and 1950 by more than 10 million inhabitants. Making up for this enormous loss required 30 years. It was only in 1980 that the Polish state attained the population number of 31 August 1939. Much bigger geopolitical and social consequences resulted, though, from the national and religious homogenisation of the country. From a poly-ethnic country in terms of both language and religion, Poland turned into one of the most mono-ethnic countries in Europe. This took place through one of the greatest population movements in the history of Europe. From the geographical point of view it had a parallel character. Millions of Poles and Germans were forced by the political events to move from the East towards the West. A turn in the secular demographic trends occurred. Over the last 1000 years German and Polish populations have been gradually moving towards the East. The ethnic boundary between the Slavonic (Polish) and Germanic (German) populations returned to the state, which existed in the Middle Ages.

the Polish literature of the subject and do not require recalling. An ample bibliography of this issue is contained in the historical study of Labuda (1974) and in the political one of Marczak (1995). Information on literature in the German language can be found in the study of the German historian Hartenstein (1997).

Thus, the turning point in the Polish-German relations was constituted by the changes of boundaries and the loss of the eastern voivodships by Germany. This fact, having high historical significance, is broadly commented in the scientific literature and in the media. At the same time, important demographic-social as well as ethnic-cultural transformations took place. They are less known and less popularised, although they contributed to fact that the verdict, issued at the end of war by the victorious powers, became irreversible.

Decisions, concerning the course of political boundaries, taken initially in Berlin and Moscow, and then at the end of war in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, became a sentence for millions of people, who were forced to adjust to the political divisions, dictated from above.⁸ The ultimate consequence of the mass movements of the population was constituted by the ethnic transformations, which encompassed a vast territory situated between the Carpathians and the Baltic Sea. Besides the purely ethnic changes that have been commented here in detail, quite significant denominational changes took place, as well. These structures are treated as an important determinant of the ideological and social attitudes of every nation and society.

The territory of eastern Germany had since the Reformation until 1945 the dominantly Protestant image. Exceptions were constituted by the regions of Opole, Warmia and the Kłodzko Bowl, where Catholics were in majority. On the remaining area of roughly 85,000 sq. km population of the Evangelical denomination dominated. After the virtually complete exchange of population the situation changed entirely. The entire area took on a purely Catholic character. Numerous Evangelical churches have been taken over by the Catholics, and the few ones that remained in the hands of Polish Evangelical-Augsburg Church, cater to a very limited number of the faithful, mostly, anyway, Poles.

The denominational division, which lasted quite stably for close to 400 years, was moved far West (in the northern part – from Niemen river, in the middle part – from upper Obra river, and in the southern part – from upper Odra river), up to the line of Odra and Nysa Łużycka. To the East of this meridional line, stretching between Zgorzelec and Świnoujście, a compact Roman Catholic area took shape, subordinated in religious terms to Vatican. This frontier has not only political-geographic, but also cultural-ideological image. On the western side of this division the German population lives (along with the few Serbo-Lusitanians), who, after 40 years of the indoctrination in the German Democratic Republic, are mostly indifferent with respect to the principles of Christian faith, while on the other side – Polish population, strongly identifying itself with the Catholicism. Even if we assume that on both sides of the border the processes of laicisation shall in the future take place, they shall also have different intensities and different cultural forms.

⁸ The shifting of Poland to the West in effect of the defeat of the Nazi Germany and the total victory of the Soviet army was in the interest of the Kremlin authorities. The initiator and the decisive force behind these boundary shifts was personally Stalin, who was convinced that leaving Poland in the newly established boundaries is in accordance with the longrange interest of the Soviet empire. He insisted especially on the weakening of Germany and subordination of Poland. Both these goals were attained and resulted in essential geopolitical changes in Europe.

The demographic and denominational transformations took on a different course on the territories that Poland lost to the advantage of the USSR. Immediately after the war more than 2 million Polish Catholics left those territories. The biggest group left for good the western areas of the Ukrainian SSR. On this territory, situated between rivers Bug and Zbrucz, the denominational structure had a dualistic character. In eastern Galicia, which until 1918 had belonged to the Habsburg empire, the Greek Catholics dominated, formally subordinated to Vatican, but preserving their Byzantine heritage in liturgy. The same area was also inhabited by numerous Poles, faithful to the Latin Catholicism (some 30% of the population). They concentrated especially around Lwów and Tarnopol. After the war, they left mainly for Lower Silesia and the Lubusza Land. In the region of Volhynia, situated to the North, Ukrainian population of Eastern Orthodox religion dominated. The share of Poles was significantly lower there.

Significantly more of the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church remained in western Belarus. They do still dominate on the areas around Grodno, Oszmiana and Lida. Usually, they declare Polish nationality, even though their everyday language is often Belarusian or Russian. In eastern Lithuania, inhabited by Poles and Lithuanians, population has always been faithful to the Roman Catholic Church. In the central part of Belarus and in the region of Polesie, Eastern Orthodox denomination, with subordination to the Moscow patriarchate, dominates. In distinction from Poland, where the attitude of the communist authorities towards religion and the Churches was relatively tolerant and liberal, and did not lead to a weakening of the position of the Catholic Church, population living to the East of the Curzon line was subject to brutal atheisation. It is only now, after political and systemic changes, that certain signs of renewal of the religious life are perceived.

The political and boundary changes, which took place after the defeat of the Nazi Germany and the unconditional capitulation of the Third Reich, brought, then, for an important part of the Central-Eastern Europe essential consequences of ethnic and cultural character. After the removal of the German and Protestant population, the area between Sudety Mts. and the Baltic Sea became ethnically Polish and Catholic. The ethnic boundary between the Slavonic and Germanic nations shifted to the West. The political and legal status of these lands that existed 800 years before, was brought back. The centuries of civilisational developments of the German colonisation were annihilated, while the resulting heritage was taken over by the population from quite another cultural realm.⁹ A highly telling sociological phenomenon occurred in this context. The first generation of the Polish settlers would often in a purposeful manner destroy the elements of the German historical heritage of these lands. German cemete-

⁹ An outstanding Polish geographer, E. Romer, in an article published immediately after the war, indicated the highly significant consequences, not so much in the material dimension as in the spiritual one, of this shifting of Poland "from the East to the West". Transfer of population of Polish nationality from the eastern areas to the western ones would change in the future, according to the author referred to, the psychological, cultural and spiritual mentality of the Polish nation. He treated this as one of the most important events in the history of Poland and regarded highly positively this revolutionary change (Romer, 1945).

ries were liquidated and all German inscriptions were systematically removed from public spaces. Emotionally motivated search took place for the traces of the ancient Slavonic or Polish royal past of the Piast dynasty. The second and third generations, born already on the territory in question, not burdened with complexes, resulting from the feeling of transitory situation, initially quite modestly, but then more and more actively referred to the German traditions, especially when these traditions had broader humanist image and represented more universal values.

Similarly, on a vast part of the territories, situated between rivers Bug and Dneper, which had belonged for several centuries to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the sole relics, reminding of the far past are the often abandoned and destroyed Catholic churches. After the downfall of the ancient Commonwealth this ethnically differentiated area became the object of confrontation between Germany and Russia. The military conflict of the World War I ended with the failure on both sides. The subsequent conflict, the World War II, brought the total and ultimate defeat of the German imperial plans. Decisions, taken in Potsdam, on the resettlement of the German population, irrevocably linked with the legal and actual acceptance for the settling of the eastern German voivodships by Poles, brought persistent consequences, which, with time, turned into the irreversible ones. The return to the previous state has become completely unrealistic. It would require moving again close to twenty million people, this time from the West to the East. The persistence of this new political setting results, in particular, from the fact that the liquidation of the poly-ethnic areas took place, these areas having been in the part of Europe we are considering here very often the loci of conflicts and the presumed reasons for aggressions and wars. This applied in a particular manner to the Polish-German borderland. The contemporary Polish-German boundary became a very distinct ethnic, religious and language division in space.

Movement of millions of Poles to the West, and especially – Polonisation of the Baltic coast from Gdańsk to Świnoujście – not only changed the geo-strategic position of Poland with respect to Germany, but at the same time transformed the geopolitical setting of the Baltic Sea region. Until the World War I the entire southern Baltic coast up to Klaipeda in the East had been in German hands. In 1919 Poland gained a narrow access to the sea, but was actually cut away from it, and the existing Polish “corridor” constituted the source for the continuing Polish-German conflict. After the World War II Poland gained 500 km long Baltic coast, while Germany lost politically and demographically not only Gdańsk and Königsberg, but also Szczecin, located on the western bank of Odra river. The geopolitical situation changed in a similar manner also within the area of Sudety Mts. Ethnically German Lower Silesia had separated Poland from Bohemia. There, another territorial wedge, inhabited by the German population, was liquidated. The political and ethnic Polish-German boundary, whose length in 1939 was 1912 km, was reduced to only 456 km.

The political consequences of the World War II are evaluated in different ways by the Polish historians and political scientists. Usually, the opinion is pronounced that the world conflict ended with a defeat, or even a national catastrophe for Poland. Loss of sovereignty, subordination of the country, loss of the eastern

voivodships, enforcement of the ineffective collectivist economic system by the USSR, destruction of Warsaw, etc., are indicated in this context. All these are facts beyond discussion, but they show only one side of the balance. The territorial and demographic issues are omitted, determining the geopolitical, economic and social future of each country. Consequences with that respect appear only after many years. Nowadays, when Poland is again sovereign, and communism collapsed, it is easier to carry out an impartial, more objective assessment of the changes that were brought about, in particular, by the Potsdam verdict. Immediately after the war it was considered to be temporary. It was commonly assumed that it would have to be verified. As time passed, though, it took on a persistent character and ultimately became approved and immovable. Resulting from this verdict a territorially compact Polish state took shape, with convenient political boundaries, and a broad access to the sea. Polish ethnic area increased by more than 1/3. The decisions from Potsdam, concerning relocation of population, apart from their ruthless and non-humanitarian character, brought complete ethnic homogenisation of Poland, which eliminated the potential sources for the ethnic conflicts and related territorial claims.¹⁰

At the same time, migration transfers and geopolitical transformations took place within the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian borderlands. They did not have such an unprecedented and crucial character as in the Polish-German borderland. Yet, withdrawal of Poland from the ethnically mixed areas of eastern Galicia, Volhynia, regions of Vilna, Polesie or Nowogródek, brought also a normalisation of relations between Poles, on the one hand, and Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians on the other. These areas have been undergoing fast Sovietisation afterwards, in ideological and political terms. This concerned later on the entire Central-Eastern Europe, but this, what happened in the years 1939–1941 in eastern Poland, was the beginning of a certain historical process, which ended spectacularly only in 1991.

Immediately after the end of the World War II it commonly appeared that the shift of the boundary between the Slavonic and Germanic elements up to the Odra-Nysa Łużycka line would out of necessity bring about a new European war, sooner or later. The potential German revenge feelings and action were much apprehended, supposed to lead to another Germanic-Slavonic confrontation. This vision very quickly lost its significance and is nowadays treated as an historical anachronism no longer valid. The political role of this vision actually became marginal already in the 1950s, when the “iron curtain” between the two opposed systems formed on the river Elbe. Nowadays, in the integrating Europe, the Polish-German boundary is only an internal division of much lesser geopolitical significance. More important is the outer boundary of the European Union, separating Slavonic Poland from also Slavonic Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.

The boundary on Odra and Nysa Łużycka separates the societies that differ as to their ethnic characteristics (nationality, language, religion) and the cultu-

¹⁰ Decisions, taken in Potsdam were extremely painful for Germany. They were linked not only with the loss of of the territory of the country, but also close to 10 million German citizens were deprived of their material wealth and were forced to leave their home lands.

ral ones. It constitutes also a distinct economic barrier, since the gross domestic product per capita in Germany is two and a half times higher than in Poland. Yet, in spite of this, we can expect that this boundary shall be gradually disappearing in the future. The memory of the enormous movements of the population, which encompassed millions of Germans and Poles, shall become only a little important historical element. It should definitely not exert influence on the relations between the German and Polish states. That is why referring to them and bringing back the respective memories for the current propaganda or electoral purposes does not have a deeper political sense and is by its very nature immoral.

This, however, does not mean that we should not analyse and consider in depth the subject matter concerning the forced political migrations, which rolled in the 1940s through the Central-Eastern Europe, bringing a sea of sufferings and victims. Many of the essential substantive issues were not fully explained. There are numerous controversies as to the numbers of migrants and demographic losses. The present report quoted in some instances the numbers and estimates that are inconsistent, with cases, where the author was not capable of unambiguously evaluating and commenting on respective data. The determination of the motive forces and the courses of individual political migrations may also constitute the subject of debates and discussions between the German and Polish scholars. Putting apart the strictly scientific problems, the objective presentation of the dramatic events associated with the resettlements and deportations may constitute a warning against the chauvinistic, imperial and totalitarian concepts, which usually get out of control, bringing political instability, military conflicts and mass relocations of the population.

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Summary

Before presenting the migrational movements of population, which have been taking place on the territory of Poland in the years of the World War II and in the immediate post-war period, the author analysed the changes of political boundaries having occurred on the territory of Poland between 1939 and 1945. Thus, ultimately, Poland lost to the Soviet Union 179,700 square km, while gaining at the expense of Germany 102,700 square km. In effect, the area of Poland decreased from 389,700 square km to 312,600 square km. Owing to the decisions originating first from Berlin and Moscow, and then to the Potsdam verdict, on the entire large territory of altogether 492,400 square km, situated between the eastern boundary of Poland as of 1939 and the western boundary of Poland as of 1945, during the period of the WW II mass population movements have been taking place. These movements were essentially carried out by force and had the character of resettling or deportations. The movement processes concerned to a large extent the population of Polish nationality, but affected, as well, Jews, Germans, and Ukrainians. The migration processes were going on all the time during the war operations, but, due to the changing military situation, they were characterised by instability in time and space. They were changing over time as to their intensity and geographical directions.

The political migrations of population on Polish territories, presented in consecutive chapters, find no precedent in world history. This applies equally to numbers and to demographic complexity. These large-scale movements of population started on September 1st, 1939, when German army attacked Poland. One of the aims of this aggression was to conquer new territories for settling the German population, and the related extermination and deportation of the nations not found fit from the racial point of view. Ultimately, after five years of bloodshed, total defeat of the Nazi Germany followed, leading to both essential changes in political boundaries, and to the exodus of a dozen million Germans from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the meantime, population movements have been taking place of the character unknown until that time. They were selective in terms of nationality. In the successive phases of the war conflict they affected different ethnic (national, racial, religious etc.) groups.

The population movements in question affected on the territory here considered almost 30 million people. This number does not account for the movements of the German and Soviet armies. Attention is focused in the analysis on the forced migrations of the civilian population and the prisoners of war, these movements being successively described and interpreted. In order to better illustrate the intensity of the processes, which took place on Polish territory, let us cite some of the most important components of these processes, namely the following population movements and deportations:

- Polish POWs after the German and Soviet aggression of 1939 0.7 million
- Polish population resettled from the areas incorporated into the Third Reich to the so-called General Governorship 1.0 million
- deportations of the population under Soviet occupation in the years 1939–1941 to the eastern parts of the Soviet Union 1.0 million
- inflow of the German population into the occupied areas of Poland 1.3 million
- Polish citizens transported to the Third Reich 3.0 million
- Jewish population transported to the places of mass extermination 4.0 million
- Soviet POWs transported to the death camps 0.8 million
- inhabitants of Warsaw deported after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising 0.6 million
- flight of the German population before the approaching Soviet Army 5.0–6.0 million
- resettlement of the Polish population from the areas lost to the Soviet Union 2.2 million
- deportation of the German population resettled to Potsdam Germany 3.2 million
- resettlement of the Ukrainian population to the Soviet Union 0.5 million
- return home of the Polish population from the West 2.0 million
- settling of the so-called Regained Lands, acquired by Poland at the expense of Germany, by the Polish population 4.0 million
- deportation of the Polish and Ukrainian population deep into the USSR 0.25 million
- resettlement of the Jewish population to Western and Northern Lands 0.15 million
- emigration of the Jewish population after the war to Palestine 0.25 million.

As a consequence of war, millions of people were forced to leave their previous residence and, against their will, subject to ruthless power, were deported. For many of them, and in the case of Jews for almost all of them, this journey ended with extermination. Realisation of these processes took place with the ample use of the systems of death and concentration camps, dispersed between Rhine in the West and Kolyma and Magadan in the East.

After the statistical and substantive analyses of the forced population migrations, the author presents the detailed demographic balance of Poland between 1939 and 1946, and then 1950. The scale of changes, having taken place is illustrated well by the fact that the population number of the Polish state decreased during these years by 11.5 million. This was the result of the changes in the course of boundaries, and of war losses, but also of the enormous movements of the population. The latter had a selective nature in terms of national structure. This brought about quite essential consequences. Poland changed from a genuinely multi-ethnic country to one of the most homogeneous mono-ethnic countries of Europe.

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The book is devoted to forced resettlements of population in years 1939-1950 within the territory of Polish state before and after II World War. The resettlements encompassed 30 million inhabitants, among others 13 million Poles, 11 million Germans and around 5 million Jews. As the result of this processes the ethnic map of Central Europe has changed.